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## PREFACE.

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THE object of this book has been so fully explained in the first chapter, that it scarcely seems necessary to inflict a Preface upon the reader. Yet there are some things which could not well be stated in the body of the work, and which it may not be amiss here briefly to set forth.

My purpose has been to present the public in these volumes with as complete and faithful a picture of contemporary England as the limits of space and opportunity would allow. That I might do this the better, I have devoted much time to the collection of materials, I have made several visits to different parts of the country, I have conversed with, and lived amongst, many varieties of people. The facts stated are those of observation and experience, and whatever there is of description in these volumes may, at least, claim to be a transcript of what I have seen.

While I have endeavoured to be as accurate as possible in my narrative of the general condition of England, and in my account of the influences which are at work among us, and which may, perhaps,



determine our future, so have I studiously avoided all historical retrospect when it did not appear absolutely necessary for a right understanding of our present state. Thus, too, while criticism and the expression of personal opinion have seemed occasionally unavoidable, I have aimed at being scrupulously sparing of both.

Of the plan of the work, I will only here say these words. Those who honour me with a continuous perusal of its pages will, I venture to think, perceive that its chapters are closely and logically connected by a pervading identity of purpose. There are certain central ideas in the book round which I have endeavoured to group my facts and descriptions, and which I have explained at sufficient length in the introductory chapter. Whether the point of view there taken be right or wrong, it is at least that which has been taken consistently, and I hope it will have the effect of imparting to the entire work a certain air of unity and cohesion. Again, though I cannot hope to have escaped sins of omission, I would venture respectfully to be allowed to remind those who may not find all their conceptions realised that this book is not an encyclopædia, but a survey; and I would further crave permission to add that in some cases I have found it necessary to treat of particular subjects elsewhere than in those chapters in which, from their titles, such subjects might be expected to have a place. Thus, though there is no chapter exclusively devoted to the literature of the day in all

its branches, I trust that a fair general view of that literature and its tendencies will be found in the three chapters, Religious England, Modern Culture and Literature, and Modern Philosophical Thought, which should be read together, and to which I might perhaps add that on Popular Amusements.

While the information contained in these volumes is for the most part the result of study of the facts at first hand, I have also profited greatly from the perusal of official documents and other treatises. Whenever a statement is made from Blue Books of a kind likely to challenge criticism or provoke controversy, I think I shall be found to have pointed out where it may be found in the original. In other cases I have not thought it necessary to load my page with those references, whose frequent repetition chiefly serves to distract the reader's attention. The parliamentary papers which I have found of most assistance are the reports of the Commission on the employment of children, young persons, and women in agriculture of 1867, of the Factory and Workshops Acts Commission of 1876, the reports of the Commissioners appointed to inquire into the Truck system of 1871, as well as the periodical reports of the Educational Department, of the Inspectors of Factories, and of the Poor Law Board, and the journals of the Royal Agricultural Society. As regards the other works to which I am mainly indebted, they will be found, I think, in almost every instance named in the text or in a foot-note. I would here,

add that I have derived many valuable facts and suggestions from the works of Mr. Clifford and Mr. T. E. Kebbel on the agricultural labourer, as also from the sketches of the same original by the author of the "Gamekeeper at Home."

My best thanks are also due for the invaluable assistance which, in the production of this work, I have received from many friends, and from some who, till it was undertaken, were strangers. Without this help the book could not have been written. The list of those who have so helped me is long, and I can only here mention a few representative names.

I am deeply indebted to the several eminent noblemen, the management of whose estates forms the subject of Chapter III., for the facilities afforded me for investigating their systems of territorial administration; and am also grateful to the following, whose names follow in alphabetical order, for much valuable information and advice in different parts of my work:— Lord Carnarvon; Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, M.P.; Bishop Claughton; Mr. G. H. Croad, Clerk of the London School Board; Sir Charles Dilke, M.P.; Mr. Grant Duff, M.P.; Mr. T. H. Farrer, Board of Trade; Canon Fleming; Mr. W. E. Forster, M.P.; Mr. Harrison, Assistant Clerk of the Privy Council; Mr. R. G. W. Herbert, Colonial Office; Sir John Lubbock, M.P.; Sir Louis Mallet, India Office; Professor D. Marks; Mr. Archibald Milman; Mr. A. J. Mundella, M.P.; Mr. C. Lennox Peel, Clerk of the Council; Mr. Albert Pell, M.P.; the Rev. Dr. Morley Punshon; Mr.

C. S. Read, M P, Mr Edmund James Smith; the Rev. Dr. Stoughton, Sir Julius Vogel; Sir Henry Drummond Wolff, M P.

Many of these gentlemen have not only given me or assisted me to obtain much useful information, but have most obligingly read through and revised various portions of the proofs. Hence, I trust I have secured a further guarantee against serious mistakes, and so invested the book with an additional value.

I have further gratefully to acknowledge more specific assistance than this. The chapter on Commercial and Financial England (VIII.) is the work of Mr. J. Scot Henderson, for that on Criminal England (XIV.) I am indebted to Major Arthur Griffiths, Her Majesty's Inspector of Prisons; the Law Courts (XXIV.) has been contributed by Mr W. D. I. Foulkes, Barrister-at-Law of the Inner Temple; the review of Modern Philosophical Thought (XXVII.) is from the pen of Mr. W. L. Courtney, Fellow and Lecturer of New College, Oxford, and author of "An Examination of Mill;" while in the chapter on the Services I have been largely assisted in the naval portion by Captain Cyprian A. G. Bridge, R.N.

T. H. S. ESCOTT.



# ENGLAND.



## CHAPTER I.

### INTRODUCTORY.

The Scope and Purpose of the Present Work—New Forces introduced into the National Life during the Present Century—Social, Political, Moral, and Intellectual Problems of the Day—What are the Duties of the State?—What the Imperial Mission of England?—The Age not only one of Transition but of Organisation—Economy of Forces of all kinds—General Contents of this Work, and Treatment adopted.

A work honestly attempting a comprehensive and faithful picture of the social and political condition of modern England requires small apology. The nineteenth century, in this country as elsewhere, has not only been marked by changes and improvements vast and sweeping in degree, but by achievements wholly new in kind. Methods and institutions long existing among us have been brought nearer to perfection; forces previously unfelt or unknown have been introduced. On the one hand, there may be witnessed the realised result of the complete operations of centuries; on the other, there is visible the as yet unfinished product of agencies still at work. At the beginning of the present century, though we had perfected the stage-coach, no new

principle had been applied to locomotion since the Romans conquered this island, or, to go back to a date still more remote, since Cyrus introduced the system of posting into the empire which he conquered upwards of three thousand years ago. Steam, at the same time that it changed the conditions of travelling, effected a social revolution throughout the world. Co-operating with the electric telegraph, and equalising the relations of space and time, as gunpowder equalised the various degrees of physical strength, it brought the country to the doors of the town, and bridged over the gulf between England and the countries of the Continent. Co-operating with free trade, it raised us to a perilous height of commercial prosperity, and added dignity and influence to the principle of wealth.

Analogous alterations have been wrought in the political and the intellectual world. A system of genuinely popular government has been established, and in the political Reform Bills of 1832 and 1867 we have had two measures entirely different in scope and principle from any previously passed by an English Parliament. For the first time in our history the attempt has been made with earnestness and success to introduce an effective scheme of popular education; and for the first time also there has been witnessed the universal dissemination of a popular literature, fettered by no political or religious constraints.

As we have seen the enlightenment, so we have seen the upheaval and the fusion of classes. Old lines of social demarcation have been obliterated, ancient

landmarks of thought and belief removed, new standards of expediency and right created. The same process has been unceasingly active in the domain of politics, philosophy, literature, and art. It may be, here and there, revival rather than revolution; a return to the old rather than a departure to the new; but, in many cases, the idols which we revered but a little time ago have been destroyed. We have made for ourselves strange gods, and we live in a state of transition to a yet unknown order. The precise functions of the new philosophy, science, theology, and art, are as loosely defined as the exact provinces of the three estates of the realm, or the future relations of the different component parts of society. We hold enlarged conceptions of our place in the scale of the peoples of the earth, but what England's mission really is we have not quite decided. We are in process of making up our minds what respect or attention, in fixing the destinies of a great nation, is due to the popular will, what obeisance to the Sovereign, what confidence to the Sovereign's advisers. We are in perplexity as to the course we should steer between the democratic and the monarchical principles. It is a moot point whether the governed or the governors should be the judges of the plan of government that is adopted. It is an open question whether we should accept measures because of the man, or base our estimate of the man upon his measures. The respective rights of employer and employed, capital and industry, are an unsolved problem. A clear and generally accepted notion of the



duties of the State has still to be formed. Politicians and sociologists debate on platforms and in magazines—five-and-twenty years ago it would have been in pamphlets—as to the amount of legislation with which it is necessary to protect the interests of a class and the well-being of the individual. If it falls within the sphere of Government to provide the machinery of education and health for the community, up to what point is it the duty of Government to insist upon its use? How far are men to be protected against their own vices, or the consequences of those vices? Are the masses to be taught sobriety by Act of Parliament? Is the drunkard to be condemned, or to be suffered to condemn himself, to close confinement for his drunkenness? Is incontinence of all kinds to carry with it its own probable punishment?

At every turn, some vital issue presents itself in a guise more or less easily to be recognised. Upwards of fifty years ago, the Municipal Corporation Act, which conferred upon ratepayers the right of electing their municipal authorities, the Town Councillors, and thus established the principle of local and representative self-government, was hailed with enthusiasm as the charter of the provincial liberties of England. The necessity of the existence of a central authority in the capital was admitted, but it was half believed that its controlling influence would seldom or never be felt. If, in the interval that has elapsed since 1835, free play has been given in many respects to the principle of local independence, a certain later tendency

towards its abridgment cannot be ignored. The great provincial towns and cities of England have acquired fresh power and importance. The self-government of villages has almost entirely disappeared. Even as regards the great towns and entire urban or rural districts, the central Government practically claims an authority which is by no means unresistingly admitted. Manchester, Liverpool, and Birmingham have grown in greatness and in influence ; but London has become increasingly the metropolis of the empire, and a minute and far-reaching system of bureaucratic authority is exercised from Whitehall, within a radius equal in extent to the length and breadth of the United Kingdom.

Modern legislation has created new departments of State. We have entire armies of State inspectors of all kinds. We accumulate annual libraries of local reports. Applications to the executive in London or to Parliament at Westminster are imperatively enforced, upon a multitude of novel and miscellaneous pleas. The government of our prisons has been vested in a body of commissioners nominated by the Crown. On the other hand, it is a question which perplexes the Government, and of which no satisfactory solution has yet been proposed, whether the administration of counties should be transferred from the hands of the country gentlemen to the nominees and representatives of the ratepayers. These are not the only matters in which the supremacy and responsibility of the State are closely canvassed. Is the State, in addition to its duties as the champion of the different communities which live under it, to fulfil the function

of an accommodating money-lender, on easy terms, for the carrying out of local improvements? What is the exact point at which the State is under an obligation to relieve local rates out of imperial taxation, and when and why does that obligation cease?

Nor is it only the position and the attributes of the English Government at home which are the subjects of controversy and uncertainty. The duties of the English Government abroad, the place which England should fill in the hierarchy of the sovereign nations of the earth, the extent to which and the channels by which her authority and influence should make themselves felt, are points on which there is much dispute, much enthusiasm, but no immediate prospect of permanent agreement. It is thought by some that we have already witnessed an emphatic and an abiding protest against the political doctrines which are commonly associated with the name of Cobden. The English nation, it is asserted, have loudly testified to their desire that England should be something more than the emporium of Europe, a place of merchandise and barter for the nations of the world. The popular veto upon an unqualified acceptance of the doctrine of non-intervention is said to have gone forth. We are, if this view be correct, thirsting for the responsibilities of empire, and panting for the fresh and invigorating atmosphere which the periodical enlargement of our imperial boundaries brings with it. Strong voices of grave warning have been raised against these ambitions. It has been hinted that we should prepare ourselves for

a reduction rather than an increase of our imperial cares, and that we should witness with satisfaction, since it is approaching with the certainty of fate, a contraction of the foreign dominions of England within narrower limits. If, it is urged by these monitors, we rush forward to the great enterprises which we are heedlessly encouraged to undertake, we shall reap our future reward in bitter mortification, in angry discontent, and, it may be, in domestic revolution.

Between these two schools of counsellors England seems to halt. It is not necessary here to forecast the selection which she may finally make, or the national consequences which that selection will involve. Upon one or two historical facts, and some of our more prominent social conditions, it may be desirable in connection with these matters very briefly to dwell. If the Englishman wants some more definite and tangible guarantee of foreign empire than a vague boast that the sun never sets upon the British flag ; if, instead of a personal devotion to fatherland, the old-fashioned belief that England, and England alone, was abundantly sufficient for all his wants, he would fain bestride the world like a Colossus, it is to be remembered that there is much in the infectious spirit of the age to explain such a sentiment. Is not the present the epoch of immense transactions and colossal speculations? Have we not imported the idea of vastness from the other side of the Atlantic? and are we not attempting its realisation here? Everywhere small establishments have been swallowed up in large. The private firm is absorbed in

the limited liability company ; the private bank in the joint-stock. The tradesman no sooner finds himself doing well than he is seized with a desire to extend his premises ; and, if matters prosper, he will presently buy up the section of a street. Above all things, it is the era of material triumphs. The miraculous feats of our engineers, the immense development of machinery, the mastery which on every hand man seems acquiring over nature, have brought with them to Englishmen a sense of boundless power—a conviction that they have the command of resource, and the fertility of invention, which mark them out as all creation's heirs. Amid the ceaseless clang of hammers and the everlasting roar of human industry, the Englishman unconsciously apprehends some echo of the far-off infinite. Carlyle is welcomed as a great teacher, because he appeals to this inarticulate feeling, and, without his readers being precisely aware of it, shapes it into ruggedly eloquent utterance. Is it an idle fancy to see in the vague popular desire for an indefinite extension of the dominions and the responsibilities of England an enlarged reflection of the insatiate passion that is generated by the social conditions under which we live ?

But the new spirit of boundless empire means more than this. If it is a reaction against a real or imaginary neglect of the imperial interests of England in the past few years by England's governors, it is in a great degree the significant product of two separate forces—the one practical, the other sentimental. England is a country whose population is perpetually

overflowing her narrow geographical limits. She wants careers for her sons ; she wants safe opportunities of investment for her capital. With an enormously developed middle class such as we now have, it is felt that there would be no adequate number of avenues of employment if our foreign possessions were reduced. India and the colonies afford occupation for tens of thousands of young men born to decent station. Even thus, more occupation, and that of a dignified or gentlemanlike kind, is wanted.

Nor is the sentimental force one whose influence can be neglected. The immense influence of wealth with the middle classes has resulted in a larger demand for professions that commend themselves to the polite world. Such a profession is the profession of arms. The soldier has been always a social favourite. The abolition of purchase in the army has resulted in the establishment of a professional army, and, by giving them a kind of family interest in the calling of arms, has created a wider and more intensely military spirit among the middle classes than once seemed possible. The volunteer movement has operated in precisely the same direction. An imperial policy not only means abundance of civilian, but regularity of military employment. At the same time that it commends itself to the English mind as a policy worthy of a race which has made its greatness by the sword, it is recognised also as stamped with the more or less avowed approval of the upper classes of English society.

It is not the only characteristic of our age that it

is transitional. It may further be described as one distinguished by the economy and organisation of forces of all kinds. While science teaches us how to prevent the waste of motive power, philanthropy encourages us to prevent the wholesale waste of humanity. Thus it is that we are constantly endeavouring to amend our educational system, to provide more effective machinery for the promotion of thrift, for the distribution of charity, and for the cultivation of other social and political virtues. Household suffrage not only exists, but in a variety of ways there is visible the organised effort to ensure that its active exercise shall be increasingly productive of substantial results. The working classes are acquiring more and more political power; at the same time they are being taught how they can make that power more directly and definitely felt. Whatever virtues, capacities, energies, may reside in any part of our population, these are now in process of being drawn forth, and pressed into practical service. Sides are being formed, specific parts taken, schools of thought multiply, societies for action increase. What was simple becomes complex, what was always complex becomes more complex still.

It will be the chief part of our duty in the following pages to analyse and explain the constituents of the artificial civilisation, and of the minutely elaborated institutions of the time. Such an attempt, it is believed, will at least have the merit of novelty. The laws and polity under which we live have received much of learned comment; their history and principles are

written in encyclopedias and in text-books. But they have, for the most part, been treated in the spirit of the constitutional anatomist; they have been examined, not so much in their practical working and mutual relations while working, as in the theory of their mechanism while at rest. They have been studied more as abstractions than as concrete realities. Hence it is that Englishmen and Englishwomen generally lack a vividly complete idea of the institutions under which they live, and have no clear and comprehensive notion of the particular forces at work in the atmosphere around them. Every one knows that we have in England local self-government; few know how in practice it is administered. In the same way, it is universally recognised that we enjoy immense commercial prosperity, but it is only those personally concerned who have an accurate acquaintance with the details of management on which that prosperity depends. The same remarks are applicable to all departments of our national life. The names are familiar to each one of us; the realities are familiar only to the comparatively limited number whom they specially affect.

What in this work will be done for institutions will be done in the same manner for classes and for occupations, for professions and pursuits; for the refining influences of culture, as well as for the organisation of commerce; for our social not less than our municipal and political system; for the amusements and recreations of the age, as well as for its literature, philosophy, art, religion, and law. Necessarily the



space that can be devoted to each of these themes is comparatively small, but into that space materials, it is hoped, may be collected which will present the reader with a comprehensive view of the influences, the tendencies, and the general economy of English life. We shall pass from the simpler elements of our civilisation and government as they may be beheld in rural England to the busier and more highly organised customs and administration of our great centres of trade and industry. We shall make the acquaintance of typical members of our labouring community in town and country, and of the changes in the conditions of their life, whether actually accomplished or in progress. Having thus seen, in concrete shape, the *personnel* of the English nation at large, their temper, tastes, toils, and pastimes, it will remain to examine the social organisation of the polite world, and the institutions and principles established among us for the administration of the empire. At each step we shall be conscious of a gradual ascent. We shall be working constantly upwards, and arriving at the general from the particular. If this method seems to involve the inversion of the natural order of importance, it may not be unattended by some advantages, and the whole will be, perhaps, the better understood when it has been seen what are the parts and influences of which it consists.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE ENGLISH VILLAGE.

An English Village a Microcosm of the English Constitution—Relations of Squire, Clergyman, and General Body of Parishioners—Sketch of the Country Parson: his Day, his multifarious Duties, Religious and Secular—Sketches of Country Parsons who do not conform to this Type—A Disorganised Parish—Hostile Estimates of the Country Clergyman of the English Church—His Relations to the Farmers and Dissenters of his Parish.

AN English village may be described as a microcosm not only of the English nation, but of the English Constitution. Roughly speaking, there is to be seen in every English parish the miniature pattern and reflection of the three estates of the realm—the lords spiritual, the lords temporal, the commons. The representative of the lords spiritual is the clergyman; of the lords temporal, the squire; of the commons, the tenant and villager; while squire and clergyman between them, like the two Houses of Parliament, practically exercise not a few of those functions which in their essence pertain to the Sovereign only. The normal or ideal state of things in a country parish is one under which there is absolute unanimity between the action and the will of the representatives of the spiritual and temporal powers—that is, between the parson and the squire—and where the inhabitants acquiesce in the decision and policy of these as in the dispensation of a beneficent wisdom. Nor is the theory of English village

life, or the analogy that has been suggested between the State and the parish, destroyed by the fact that deviations from the ideal standard are not unknown. For the most part, the elements to which village life may be reduced combine with tolerable harmony in practice ; and when there is discord, it is not the system, but clumsiness or error in its administration, which is to blame.

Recent legislation, as will be presently seen, has in some respects materially affected the relations between those in whom are vested the secular and religious jurisdiction of English country districts. But the main principles of the system are now what they always have been, and completely to eradicate them would entail a social revolution. Just as the squire—the word is used for convenience sake, whether the local great man be peer, baronet, small country gentleman, or that combination of minister of the Church of England and territorial potentate which Sydney Smith has called Squarson—necessarily has a moral influence added to his secular condition, so the clergyman has attributes distinctly secular in addition to his ecclesiastical prerogatives. The Church of England lies at the root of the parochial system of England. The subdivisions of the country are ecclesiastical. The local dispensary, the poor-rate, the way-rate, the vestry, are parochial institutions in the administration of which the clergyman has, in virtue of his position as clergyman, a legal voice. Not merely the village parson, rector, or vicar has definite legal duties and authority, but the clergyman's churchwarden, the parish clerk, the

sexton. The unity between Church and State is typified in the administration of an English village at every turn. The squire is a magistrate: not improbably the rector is a magistrate too. The clergyman and the congregation have each their churchwarden. The parish clerk, beadle, and sexton have all of them a legal and civil status, and in a great number of cases share, with the clergyman, whose nominees they probably are, responsibility for the order of the parish.

The position and responsibility of the clergyman vary according to circumstances. The growing tendency on the part of the squire is to be elsewhere than at his country home during the greater part of the year. His parliamentary duties demand his presence in London; his social obligations compel him to make a round of visits; regard for his health and that of his family renders it necessary that he should travel annually for a few weeks. He is, in effect, for nine months out of every twelve, an absentee landlord; but he has, he remarks, the satisfaction of knowing that in his absence everything is looked after admirably. He has an agent in whom he reposes the utmost confidence, and who has *carte-blanche* to do what is fair and reasonable in the interest of his tenants. He has a clergyman whom he pronounces a blessing to the entire neighbourhood. Thus, one of two things happens: either all local authority, secular as well as ecclesiastical, becomes concentrated in the hands of the clergyman, or a struggle develops itself between the clergyman and the representative of the squire—his

agent. It depends in each case on the character of the clergyman and the squire which of the two alternatives is realised. In the majority of instances the two authorities pull well together. But perhaps the best way of forming an idea of the working of the system in English life will be to take a concrete illustration.

We are, let the reader suppose, engaged in visiting an agricultural village, whose population is some five or six hundred souls, situated half a dozen miles from the nearest railway station. It is the month of June; every feature in the peaceful landscape is in the perfection of its beauty; the fresh deep green of the English foliage—the freshest and deepest in all the world—has as yet lost nothing of its depth or freshness; there is an odour of newly-made hay in the air; the music of the whetstone sharpening the mower's scythe may be heard in the morning, and all day long the lark carols high over head. The whole village, in fact, is busily occupied with the hay harvest, and the farmers are intent upon getting it in before there comes the break in the weather threatened by certain ugly barometrical signs. The village is a purely agricultural one; it contains a general store shop, a shoemaker's, a small tailor's, a small inn, and one or two beer shops. The lord of the manor is also the representative of the county in Parliament, and, as is incumbent upon an elective legislator, is, in these days of leafy June, busily engaged in his senatorial duties at Westminster. A better squire no parson, as the parson himself admits, could wish. Indeed, the two

have been friends together from boyhood. They were companions at school, played in the school eleven at Lord's, went to the university in the same October term. The squire is not a very great landlord, for his property in that neighbourhood barely produces £3,000 a year, but he has possessions elsewhere, and he is not without judicious and profitable investments. He is liberal, sees that the dwellings of his labourers are kept in proper condition, gives largely to all local funds, and has just built some very handsome schools. But he has never been guilty of the indiscriminate bounty which is the parent of pauperism. He has been fortunate in securing as his bailiff and agent a respectable gentleman, who has no social ambition of an aggressive character, and no wish to assert his authority in opposition to that of the rector.

And the rector himself—what of him? That is the rectory, two or three hundred yards this side of the church. A substantial building, set in a pleasant garden, girt with a hedge of fuchsias, myrtle, and laurels. The glebe attached to the living is extensive, and from it indeed comes the larger portion of the rectorial revenue. A few fields the parish priest keeps in his own hands, and he too, like his farmers, has been busy hay-making and hay-carrying in this glorious June weather. It is now the afternoon, and three or four hours in every afternoon—the interval, that is, between lunch and dinner—it is his habit to devote to driving, to riding, or, more commonly, pedestrian tours of parochial inspection, and visits to his

parishioners. At the present moment he is strolling through one of Farmer A.'s fields, and—he is an authority on these matters—is taking up and smelling, in the approved fashion of the connoisseur, some of the grass which has just fallen ridgeways before the mower's scythe. He has a well-made, upright figure; a clear, open expression of countenance; he is rather over fifty years of age, and his dress is of black cloth, distinguishable in hue but scarcely in cut from that which, were he at home instead of at Westminster, the squire himself would wear. He chats occasionally with the men who are busily employed in filling the carts, or in any of the duties of the field, but you may notice that he is very careful to avoid the appearance of inflicting his company on any one of them.

Let us see how he is occupied at other hours of the day. Family prayers are over by half-past eight, for the rector likes to have finished his breakfast and to get to his study by nine. This morning he is particularly busy; there are letters to answer, a sermon to prepare, diocesan documents to be read and signed, and there is a great deal of reading which he is anxious to do. He has scarcely sat down to his tea and toast, with yesterday's *Times*, just arrived, at his side, when a knock comes at the door. It is Martha Hodge, who wants to know when her baby can be christened; or John Giles, who is anxious to fix the day and hour for his Reverence to tie the knot between himself and Sarah Stokes; or it may be that one of the farmers' wives has called round to speak to the rector's lady on the subject of

the tunes and hymns which were sung last, or will be sung next Sunday ; or it is a labourer's wife, who has a tale of sorrow and want to impart, who seeks relief from great destitution, and who is striving up to the last to keep out of the jurisdiction of "the House." At last he has disposed of some half-dozen of these interruptions, and is secure in his library, deep in papers and in thought. But his seclusion is not to remain long unbroken. The inevitable knock at the door comes, and one of the parochial functionaries is announced as waiting to see him. It is his churchwarden, whose duty it is to inform him that one of his congregation—a farmer of a controversial turn, or a farmer's wife or daughter, with a nice eye for ritual propriety, has taken exception to something that was said, sung, or done in church last Sunday ; protests that he or she distinctly saw the pastor make, or fail to make, some specific genuflexion at a certain point of the service ; complains that in his or her opinion the language of such-and-such a hymn smacks too much of Popery or Calvinism ; declares that between the tune to which the organist (who happens to be the rector's eldest daughter) played it, and a music-hall ditty, the air of which was recently ground out by a nomad Italian organ-boy who chanced to be passing through the village, there was a suspiciously strong resemblance.

The object for which the interview is sought may be of a less frivolous character. The parish is disturbed by some crime, agitated by some scandal, or is threatened by some nuisance, big with the seeds of



death and disease to the inhabitants. The question, therefore, submitted to the parish clergyman by churchwarden, parish clerk, or beadle, is whether immediate application should not be made to the head of the local constabulary, or to the local sanitary inspector, or to whatever other official has cognisance of the special cause of danger or offence. Nor do the secular responsibilities of the country clergyman end here. If the village post-office is also a savings-bank, those of his parishioners who are of thrifty habits will be able to transact their own small financial business without his intervention. But it often happens that no such encouragement to thrift as a savings-bank in connection with the post-office exists, and in this case the rector will frequently find himself doing duty as village banker. Occasionally, too, he discharges in minor maladies the functions of the village doctor. The local *Æsculapius*, or the Hippocrates employed by the guardians, lives at some little distance, and has, it may be, besides, an objection to attending gratuitous patients. There are medicines to be prescribed, soothing drinks and nutritious diet to be sent to the sick-room. No squire who for eight or nine months out of the twelve is an absentee, however well-disposed, and however comprehensive the instructions which he may have left to his servants, can entirely relieve the clergyman as a dispenser of material comforts and relief. Then, as the rector or vicar is something of a banker and a doctor, so too is he something of a lawyer and general agent as well. He is often invoked to arbitrate in

family differences ; he is expected to procure occupation for lads and maidens who wish to go out into the world. He is, in fact, looked upon as an oracle whose inspiration is never to fail, and as a source of charity which is never to run dry. Of the ten or fifteen thousand beneficed clergymen of the Church of England, it is the exception to find one who does not, to the best of his ability and means, discharge most of these duties ; and not these only, but many more.

We have spoken of the documents which our parson has received by the morning's post. Among them are some that come from the Education Office, and relate to his school. There are long and complicated returns to be filled up, which will necessitate a conference with the schoolmaster and schoolmistress. Possibly he has no sooner mastered the contents of these documents, and is busying himself upon his sermon, than he receives a call from the schoolmaster. The School Inspector of the district, a young gentleman fresh from the university, has suddenly made his appearance on a surprise visit. This youthful dignitary has to be duly met, and afterwards be invited to luncheon, and discoursed with on the idiosyncrasies of the district. And this is the lightest portion of the burden which the Education Department and the existing Education Acts impose on the shoulders of the beneficed divine. There are school committees which meet periodically ; the parson himself frequently has to do duty as a house-to-house visitor among the parents of his parish, and personally to inquire into the causes of absence : an

invidious task this, and one for the discharge of which some other functionary might reasonably be provided. Even yet the catalogue of the secular or semi-secular offices of the country parson is not exhausted. There is many a village clergyman who has had quite as much experience as an ordinary solicitor in the drawing of wills, and as habits of thrift increase among the working classes there is a proportionate increase also in the duties of this description which devolve upon the minister of the Church.

The average English rustic has a profound objection to, and suspicion of, banks of deposit of any kind. Gradually he is overcoming his prejudice against the Post-office Savings-bank; but as a rule he prefers acting as his own banker, and keeping in some secret place the money which he has been able to put by. If he be of an unusually confiding disposition, he will entrust his accumulated hoard to some individual—the clergyman, or his landlord. Banks break, and firms go into liquidation, and from the point of view of the agricultural mind there is always danger in numbers. But the squire or the parson is an integral and visible part of the system under which the peasant lives his daily life, and thus it is that the parson, who is always on the spot, is constantly commissioned to purchase a cottage, or make some other investment. The treasury in which the precious coins—gold, silver, and copper—are deposited is almost without exception an old stocking, or tea-pot, secreted in some mysterious corner. It is far from unprecedented for the

rustic capitalists who resort to this primitive mode of banking to have by them upwards of £100. Unfortunately it is by no means always the case that the possessor of this wealth is as wise as he or she has been thrifty, and takes the precaution of bequeathing it in legal form. No will has been made; some friend or relation, having, it may be, an idea of the hoarding which has been in process for years, explores each nook and cranny of the dwelling, encounters the tea-pot or stocking, and secretly exulting in the truth that dead men tell no tales, appropriates the contents.

And there are other functions which our clergyman is called upon to perform. He has to attend to various administrative and deliberative duties at stated intervals in the adjoining town. Perhaps he is a member of the Board of Guardians; perhaps, and more probably, he is on the directorate of the county hospital or reformatory. And yet within the limits of his own village he has hygienic occupation enough, as, indeed, has been already shown. He is the dispenser of not a little charity of his own; he is the distributor and trustee of funds which landlords who have property in the place leave to him to manage. The task may not involve much labour, but it is a singularly ungrateful one. He has to contend against a vulgar idea that to the fingers of him who has the management of money, money somehow or other inevitably adheres, and the recipients of the bounty secretly insinuate, or sometimes openly aver, that the sum available for eleemosynary purposes is not what it ought to be. Nor is he without some official

connection with two of the chief institutions in almost every English village—the Clothing Club and the Benefit Society. As regards the former he acts as banker and accountant, enters in a book all the payments made by different members to the fund, and when the season for purchases arrives, draws up and signs the orders on the tradesmen in the neighbouring town.

With the Benefit Society he has less to do in an official capacity. These institutions may be described as organising the application of the co-operative principle, in some of its most elementary shapes, to the simple conditions of rustic life. The plan of their formation and their operative method are always the same. They offer a premium to thrift, but annuities or insurance against death do not usually enter into their scheme. The average sum paid by the majority of the members is fifteen shillings a year. When disabled by illness they receive from the common fund nine shillings a week. In case of death, each member is entitled to £3 to £6, as the expenses of his own, and £2 to £4 in defrayal of those of his wife's funeral. The society also employs a medical man of its own, who, in consideration of a certain small salary, usually about £30 a year, attends to all members without payment of any further fee. In case of permanent disablement from sickness or age, the society discontinues its relief, while there is a regulation, by no means invariably observed, that relief shall be withheld entirely when the accident or illness is the result of vicious

and preventible causes—has come from drunkenness or any form of debauchery. An idea may be gained of the prosperity of these associations from the fact that in an agricultural village of a midland county, with a population of 500, a Benefit Society, which has been in existence for forty years, has at the present moment a sum of £600 invested in the Three per Cents. The treasurer of these societies is usually a farmer. The clergyman is the chaplain, who is often consulted as to the administration of the fund, asked to arbitrate in disputed cases of relief, and occasionally called upon to advise as to investments. A Benefit Society would be nothing without its annual feast; and at the banquet—2s. 6d. per head—given on this occasion it is the natural thing that the clergyman should preside.

From this, which is in no way an exaggerated account of the multifarious services that a parish clergyman is called upon to render to his parishioners in their secular life, some notion may be formed of the far-reaching consequences of the good or evil which he has it in his power to effect. In a majority of English villages he is, or may be, the soul and centre of the social life of the neighbourhood, the guarantee of its unity, the tribunal to which local differences and difficulties are referred, and before which they are amicably settled. That he is practically all or most of this, is really admitted by the enemies of the Church and clergy of England, when they allow that the great argument against the disestablishment of the Church

is the hopelessness of providing anything like an efficient substitute for it in country districts. Its strength, in fact, lies in its parochial organisation, and its direct connection with the State confers a dignity upon its ministers, and secures for them a confidence which Englishmen are slow to accord to men who are without a public official status.

The condition of those parishes in which the resident clergyman does not use the manifold influences at his disposal for good, and neglects or misconceives the plain duties of his position, is the best proof of the extent of clerical opportunities. The country parson whom we have hitherto had in our mind's eye is a conscientious, sensible English gentleman, anxious to do his duty towards God and his neighbour, possessed of no extreme views, and bent upon the illustration of no subtleties of theological refinement. He lives in his parish for ten months out of the twelve, and he finds that the eight or nine weeks' change of scene which he thus allows himself renders him the fresher and the more capable of work when he returns. But as there are absentee squires, so there are absentee parsons, and these are of two or three types. There is the clergyman who has an innate dislike to country life, who has two or three marriageable daughters, as many sons who require to be educated, and a fashionable, valetudinarian wife. The worthy couple arrive at the conclusion that they can stand it no longer. The girls all ought to be out in the great world: they are pretty girls, they are good girls; but what chance have they of

finding husbands in the seclusion of Sweet Auburn? Then the boys ought to be at school, but schooling is so expensive! Moreover, the lady is more than ever convinced that the climate does not suit her; and as for her husband, she has distinctly heard an ugly dry cough, which ought to be looked after, proceed from his reverend chest in the night watches. A communication is addressed to the bishop, or a personal interview is sought with his lordship, and the rector and his family obtain leave of absence for a year. At the expiration of this term, the application, backed by the same cogent arguments, is renewed, and the leave of absence is extended. Meanwhile, the curate in charge, installed at the rectory at Sweet Auburn, is one of the many hack parsons who abound in England, and who are satisfied to do the duty of the place for an indefinite period, in consideration of a small stipend, the whole of the produce of the excellent garden, the cheapness of butcher's meat, and the salubrity of the climate. The services are gone through in a slovenly, perfunctory manner. Sunday after Sunday the congregation becomes smaller and smaller. There is very little visiting done by the deputy incumbent of this cure of souls in the parish on week-days; and the tendency of everything is towards a relapse into primitive paganism.

So it goes on from year to year. One morning the news comes that the absentee rector has died at Bath or Cheltenham. In course of time his successor is appointed—an enthusiastic, devout, earnest man. Perhaps it is his first experience. He had expected to find



Sweet Auburn all that Goldsmith had described it. He had looked for a cordial reception from clean, smiling, virtuous villagers, and hearty, God-fearing farmers. Instead, he finds that his lot is cast in an atmosphere of want and sin. The villagers are ill-fed, ill-clad men and women, who regard the parson as their natural enemy; the farmers whom his fond imagination had pictured are grumbling malcontents, the votaries of a crass, unintelligent disbelief, who seldom enter church, and who are wholly indifferent to the cultivation of strictness and right. The sanitary condition of the place is detestable, and the new parson is aghast at the state of things which confronts him. He had dreamed of Paradise, and here are the squalor, filth, and vice of Seven Dials.

This is an extreme case, but it is far from being the only instance which might be given of parochial neglect at the hands of the responsible clergyman. Sloughton-in-the-Marsh is a college living. It is not, indeed, likely to remain so much longer, for the master and fellows of the society on whose patronage Sloughton is are anxious to sell it and other benefices, in order that they may have increased funds at their disposal for educational purposes, and for the establishment of fresh university centres throughout England. For a long succession of years the spiritual wants of Sloughton have been ministered to by distinguished members of the college to which the living belongs, who have either wearied of the life of the university, or who have received the benefice as the reward of their educational efforts

elsewhere. At the present moment the rector of Sloughton may be a representative of any one of several distinct divisions of divines. He is, perhaps, an ecclesiastical dignitary of some standing—a cathedral canon and eminent preacher at Whitehall. He is a bachelor, a member of the Athenæum Club, has his *pied-à-terre* in London, possibly keeps on some rooms at Oxford, and when he is at Sloughton, values it chiefly on account of the opportunities of learned leisure which it offers. In his absence there are a couple of curates who may indeed be blameless, but who, not having the authority, can not exhibit the efficiency of their chief. The accomplished rector, when he is there, always preaches once on a Sunday, his sermon being about as intelligible to his flock as an extract from Butler's "Analogy," or the late Dean Mansel's "Bampton Lectures;" and, being a kind-hearted as well as a liberal man, visits his parishioners, and makes them presents of money.

Or let it be supposed that the rector of Sloughton is in no sense justly open to the imputation of absenteeism. He lives in his rectory for nine months out of the twelve, and, when there, is closely and constantly employed. The only thing is that his occupations, which are sufficiently exacting, have nothing whatever to do with his parishioners. The fact is, he takes pupils, and edits school and college classics. He is a man of blameless life, of great natural kindness, of large and liberal culture. But he is a born school-master or professor. He would gladly dedicate his existence to researches into the genitive case at

Heidelberg, or he might be trusted to do all that scholarship and industry could do towards improving the standard of Latin composition at a school. At Sloughton he does to its fullest extent his duty by his pupils and their parents. It would shock him infinitely to be told that he failed to do it by his parishioners. He dislikes death-beds, it is true. Surrounded by young people, he is not quite clear that he is justified in entering sick-rooms when there is any suspicion of infectious disease. Yet he has attended several death-beds in the course of the last two years, and he is not aware that in any case where one of his parishioners has been stretched on a bed of sickness or pain he has failed to attend when summoned, or to despatch a curate. As regards his more strictly ecclesiastical duties, the services in his church are performed with scrupulous neatness and care. His sermons are compact, clear, scholar-like little essays, capable of being understood by the most untutored intellect, on popular religion and morality. It is, in fact, impossible justly to accuse him of any specific dereliction of his duty ; and yet the organisation of his parish is far from complete. Still, the machine is kept in operation—there is no break-down ; there may be apathy and indifference on many points on which it could be wished that a stronger and livelier interest existed ; but there is no open feud between parson and people, such as there is quite sure to be when the former feels himself compelled, for conscience sake, to run athwart the popular will. It may be matter of satisfaction that the race of

orthodox high and dry clerics are disappearing from the face of the earth, and that the clergyman who hunts three days a week is becoming an anachronism. But it is probable that none of these was the instrument of as much mischief, as much alienation from religion itself, as the country parson who believes that it is his sacred duty violently to break with the ecclesiastical traditions of his parish—to introduce the representation of a high Anglican ritual, if the antecedents of the place have been Protestant and Evangelical; or to root out the last traces of Anglicanism with iconoclastic fervour and indignation, if his predecessor has belonged to the school of Keble and Pusey. Common sense and infinite tolerance are as indispensable in the successful clergyman as devotion to duty, and they are virtues that were perhaps more uniformly forthcoming among the working parsons of the old school than the self-sacrificing but indiscreetly zealous and aggressive apostles of the new.

But it will be contended by many persons that the view which has here been presented of the country parson is an illusion born of weak partiality for the Establishment, and that even the instances of by no means model parsons which have been given here are far from being sufficiently unfavourable to be frequently true. Some clergymen in rural England, it will be said, are drunken; others are in a chronic state of insolvency; many are ignorant, unlettered—not merely devoid of knowledge, but devoid of the wish to acquire knowledge. Many, it may be admitted, are indifferent, careless, worldly, putting on piety with their surplices, and

and are duly audited by the gentleman who is personally attached to, and who is always in immediate attendance on, the great man, with clerks and deputy agents at his disposal. The books are kept with the exactness of the books of a life assurance office. As it is known what the expenditure upon the property ought to be, so also do the means exist which render it possible to check with infallible accuracy the expenditure of the household. The steward forwards his statement of money actually expended—or, rather, of bills incurred—once a month, all accounts being settled at monthly intervals. It is not only the actual amount spent in any given period of four weeks and a few days which is entered in these volumes, the number of persons to be provided for is noted as well. Thus an average is struck, and, given the size of the household during any month, reference to earlier entries will give the data for a verdict of the reasonableness of the pecuniary statement specially under review.

There are fewer points of difference to be noted in the out-door management of the great estates of England than formerly. The tendency undoubtedly has been to reduce varieties to a dead level of excellence and merit. Picturesque customs and the perpetuation of romantic and feudal traditions will be looked for in vain in all but a few instances. It is worth noticing that whereas such survivals are occasionally found on properties which have been from the first in the hands of secular lords, they are practically unknown on estates which first came into the hands of secular

lords at the time of the Reformation. It would, in fact, seem as if the aristocracy who profited by the destruction of monasteries, anxious to break at once and for ever with the old régime, plunged into the modern and prosaic period at once. This is notably the case with the great House of Bedford, whose property, however, once possessed, in all matters appertaining to its administration, certain marked peculiarities. Prominent amongst these was the establishment of an industrial village, which was an integral section of the property at Woburn. The remains of this settlement are still to be seen in the tall factory tower conspicuous among the trees. In the old days, a generation or two ago, the whole place resounded with the din of industry and labour. The property of the Duke of Bedford was then self-sufficient, in the Aristotelian sense of the word. If a house or cottage had to be built, rails or gates put up, repairs of any kind, whether on the roofs of the tenements above or in the drainage of the ground beneath, the workmen to execute the task were ready and at hand within the confines of Woburn Abbey. If the same work had to be done on other portions of the ducal estates in different parts of England, a contingent from the Bedfordshire organisation was drafted off. There was something eminently feudal in the idea, and there was much which, in its day, was not without its practical advantages. But the shrewd heads of the ducal house began to find that the time had arrived when money could be saved, and the work done as effectively, if they resorted to the open labour market.

The Woburn organisation was disbanded, and contracts with master builders and others took its place.

On the Duke of Westminster's Cheshire estate, at Eaton, a system not unlike that which formerly existed at Woburn is still in force. Here a staff of workmen are maintained at a distance of two miles from his Grace's house, in a place known as "the Yard." The Yard is, in fact, a small industrial village, and is filled with workshops and workmen's dwellings. To become attached to this staff is generally regarded as a piece of promotion and luck. The actual money value of these places is not, indeed, in excess of the wages of labourers elsewhere. The wage itself may be a trifle lower, but so also is the rent of the houses, while the accommodation and sanitary arrangements are perfect in every detail. Men know well enough that they have but once to secure the position, and to behave well, and that their future in life is made. They will be encouraged to practise the virtue of thrift, and working steadily through the years of strength and manhood, they will find that provision has been made for old age, sickness, or death. But the staff of workmen thus maintained at Eaton is not sufficient for the wants of the property at all periods of the year. The Duke assumes, in the majority of instances, responsibility for the repairing of farms and cottages, and the contingent of the Eaton Yard labourers has to be reinforced by help from without. In such cases as these, the necessary arrangements are, of course, made by con-

tract, and it would probably be a rare exception to find any large estate in the present day on which the contract system did not prevail exclusively.

If we would see how onerous and complex estate management may be, how nearly the power and responsibilities of a great territorial noble approach to those of royalty, what various departments the principality of an English noble may include, how wide is the knowledge and how incessant the care necessary for dealing with each, we cannot do better than go to the most northern county of England. We will select a district of which Alnwick Castle is the centre, and it is the dominion of the Duke of Northumberland of which we shall take a rapid survey. The ancestral home of the Percies may be said in a sense to symbolise the character of their realm. It is a feudal castle, at once in a park and in a town. On one side, opposite the chief entrance gate, is the main street of Alnwick, a thriving community of some six thousand souls, on the other side, strictly speaking on all the other sides, is the park, holding within its broad limits every variety of woodland scenery of moor and forest, of rugged mountain, of wild coppice, of well-tended shrubberies, and of rich pasture land. A river of uncertain depth and breadth traverses the vast domain—now a rivulet, and now a foaming torrent; here so shallow that the sands that form its channel give it all their colour, and here a series of deep, dark pools, where the salmon-trout lie; at one part overhung by trees, at another



flowing on through an unshaded bed of shingle and rock. There are drives, under artificially formed avenues, along a road as smooth as that running from Hyde Park Corner to the Marble Arch ; but a little distance off the path is steep and rocky, and one is in the heart of a complete sylvan solitude, with a deer park on one hand, while on the other rise the bleak heights which the black game love.

The situation of the castle typifies the nature of the estate, because the Duke of Northumberland derives his revenues partly from urban, partly from rural sources. He is the lord of many acres wholly given up to the farmer ; he has also acres burrowed by collieries and rich in mineral wealth, and acres which are part of, or which have been already annexed to, the great capital of the district, the famous port of Newcastle-on-Tyne. As he has farms and villages, so he is proprietor of the soil on which docks and entire towns are built. Midway between Newcastle and Tynemouth an army of labourers is briskly employed in excavating and clearing away the soil, admitting the waters of the Tyne further into the land, and in erecting mighty walls of granite, and cement, almost as indestructible as granite, as bulwarks against the river. The works are undertaken by and at the expense of the Tyne River Commissioners. But the land is the Duke of Northumberland's, and has been acquired by the Commission on a perpetual ground rent. The ducal interests are represented on that Commission, and the plans for

the new docks have been submitted to the Duke. We go a few miles farther down the river, and at last reach the point where it discharges itself into the German Ocean. We have in fact reached Tynemouth, at once the Brighton, Ramsgate, and Margate of the prosperous inhabitants of Newcastle-on-Tyne. A more breezy watering-place, a nobler expanse of sands, a finer frontage of sea could not be desired. It is plain that Tynemouth is a pleasure-town of modern growth. It is plain also—from the predominance of the word “Percy” in the names of the new streets, crescents, and gardens—to whom Tynemouth belongs. One of the last titles which may have caught the eye of the traveller as he drives in a cab to St Pancras Station is perhaps Woburn Place, or Tavistock Place. Suppose that he leaves the train at Bedford, Tavistock or Woburn is still the legend on the first trim row of houses which meets his glance. The influence and power of the great families of England are ubiquitous. There is no escaping from them, they are shown alike in city and country, in town and suburb. At one end of Tynemouth a new building has just been constructed, with adjacent pleasure-grounds and picturesque walks. it is a winter garden and aquarium, built by the inhabitants of the place on ground which is given them by the benevolent despot of the district, the Duke of Northumberland, for a nominal rent. A splendid new road has just been completed: it is the Duke of Northumberland at whose expense the work has been done. What Eastbourne is to the

Duke of Devonshire, that Tynemouth is to his Grace of Northumberland. There is an obvious advantage in the supreme control of a town being thus vested in one landlord. The place is sure not to be disfigured by hideous buildings, and not to be spoiled by an irruption of undesirable visitors. At Eastbourne and at Tynemouth there are laws as inflexible as those of the Medes and Persians against the erection of houses which do not come up to a certain standard of beauty and solidity.

Make a circular tour of twenty miles in the neighbourhood of Tynemouth, and you will perpetually find yourself on the property of the Duke. It is not a picturesque neighbourhood, but it is covered by snug homesteads and farm-buildings—the perfection of cleanness and neatness. The soil is fairly fertile, but the chief wealth of the land is underneath. We are, in fact, now on the mining property of the Duke. The colliers have just finished their spell of work, and are going home to their pretty cottages with the well-cared-for gardens behind, and their porches covered with honeysuckle and roses. The mine is in the hands of a company, the Duke receiving a royalty on its produce, and that is the arrangement usually adopted where the soil of a property is rich in minerals. For extent and variety combined, the Duke of Northumberland's property is perhaps unequalled in the United Kingdom. A drive of thirteen miles from Acklington to Alnwick will take you through a tract of country utterly different from that in the vicinity of Tynemouth,

which belongs entirely to the same great potentate. It is a rich farming district, the average acreage of each farm being four or five hundred acres. Some of the farms on the Northumberland property are nearly ten times this size, but inasmuch as the ground let with them is for the most part sterile moorland and highland, their size is in an inverse ratio to their value. England could show no better specimens of farming than are here to be seen, no better-built farmhouses, no more capacious and scientifically arranged out-houses, stables, and farmyards, no more comfortable houses for the farm-labourers themselves. The Duke's tenants are thorough masters of their calling, and are in what is spoken of as a large way of business. There is no improvement or new invention relative to the tillage of the soil or the increase of its capacities that is not speedily adopted, no precaution possible to human foresight and experience for reducing the evil consequences of ungenial and inclement seasons which is not taken. It is a peculiarity of the Northumberland property that in almost every case the labourers live within a few minutes' call of the farmer who employs them. Each farm is in fact a compact, self-contained industrial settlement. There is the farmhouse itself—a complete modern mansion, with all the improvements of modern times, furnished within like what it is, the residence of an educated gentleman of the nineteenth century—the farm-buildings, with their copious supply of light, air, and water, granaries, barns, and the most approved

apparatus for the prevention of waste in any shape ; and finally, grouped around or flanking these, the dwellings of the labourers with their porch, oven and tank, cool larder, and little plots of garden ground before and behind.

Such are the external features of a typical English property of the first order of magnitude. What is the principle of its internal management, and the system of its general administration? The chief agent or commissioner of this vast domain, with its manifold industries and opportunities, its physical characteristics and resources as diverse as the features in the vast landscape which it includes, must necessarily be a man of wide experience, great practical knowledge, a quick eye, a tenacious memory, an apt judge of character, a thorough farmer, a first-rate man of business, equally fitted for the supervision of purely agricultural and purely commercial affairs. He is responsible to his chief for the protection of his interests and the improvement of his property, of whatever kind. He has to negotiate with river commissioners and town corporations. He has to negotiate for the conclusion, and superintend the execution, of contracts. He has to listen to applications from tenants, to see to the redress of grievances, to decide what demands are reasonable and what suggestions are wise, to judge whether it is desirable that repairs in any farm-buildings or farmhouse shall be undertaken this year or shall be postponed until the next, to know accurately what are the works in any particular department of which the state

of the ducal exchequer will admit at any particular time, to communicate on all these matters periodically with the Duke, to keep an eye over the expenditure and income of what is in itself a little empire. How does he set to work to do all this? The entire property is mapped out into provinces called, in the case of the Northumberland property, bailiwicks. It is for the commissioner to see that at the head of each bailiwick is placed a proper and responsible person. Applicants for the position are, as may be supposed, overwhelmingly numerous. Estate management has become a profession, and the younger sons of the great families are among those who seek employment in it.

But the agents superintending the bailiwicks are only one division of the commissioner's staff. Entering the courtyard of Alnwick Castle by the town gate, one finds immediately on the right hand the Alnwick estate office. Here once every week the commissioner sees any one of the Duke's tenants who desires an interview, on whatever purpose. Here, too, he meets his representatives. It is from this office that all orders are issued as to the repairs which are to be done; and if a builder wishes to contract for any work on the estate it is to this office that his application is made. The official who is directly concerned with this branch of the office is the "clerk of the works." The agents on the separate bailiwicks report that on such-and-such a farm it is desirable that such-and-such things shall be done, the Duke's commissioner at once instructs the clerk of the works to

consider the feasibility of the proposal, and this gentleman proceeds to look at the matter from a technical point of view. He too, in his turn, makes a report, which includes an estimate of the expenditure and other observations. This document comes before the commissioner, who, if he is of opinion that the time is ripe for the enterprise, and that the Duke's hands are not already too full, forwards the entire series of papers, or a *précis* of them, to his Grace, who writes his answer, "Yes" or "No," "I approve" or "I disapprove," in the margin. It may, and does occasionally, happen that there is a conflict of opinion between the bailiwick agent and the clerk of the works, or architect, as to the expediency of some specific proposal. They may disagree as to the exact spot on which certain buildings are to be erected, the extent to which certain repairs are to be carried, the necessity of carrying out any repairs at all. In such cases the commissioner himself will be called upon to arbitrate, and his decision in that stage of the business is final. The Duke reserves to himself the right of sanctioning or rejecting the idea; but direct communication between the Duke and his agents, or the Duke and his tenants, there is none.

Next to the Duke of Northumberland's Northumbrian dominions, the Duke of Cleveland's Durham estate is probably the largest owned by any one great proprietor in any single county. It commences four miles to the west of Darlington, a town which contrasts in every respect with Alnwick. Here there are no visible signs of that feudal influence which we have seen

outside the walls of the Percys. Factory towers, which are to the great manufacturing centres of England what the forests of masts are to its great harbours, are visible from afar. The atmosphere is heavy with smoke, and the streets swarm with factory hands. Look where you will, there is nothing to remind one of the old county town, dominated by the social influences of a ruling house. Darlington is twelve miles distant from Raby Castle, which is as nearly as possible the centre of the ducal principality. There is nothing quite like Raby in England. It is a huge pile of castellated granite architecture, which bears the stamp in every part of no mock antiquity, and is surrounded by a moat centuries old, filled with water. Here there are mediæval courtyards and quadrangles, and it is a peculiarity of the house that, at the chief entrance, there are doors that, on being opened, admit a carriage bodily into the hall, by a passage which runs across the spacious chamber into the courtyard on the other side.

The portion of the Duke's property in the immediate neighbourhood of Raby, amounting to some 25,000 acres, is held by tenantry whose occupations range from 100 to 500 acres each. Much of this land has been newly laid down to grass, the Duke of Cleveland being generally disposed to encourage the conversion of tillage into pasturage, and assisting his tenants in the work. The seeds are given, free of all charge, to the occupiers of the soil by the landlord, whenever the land is pronounced to be in a suitable condition for their reception. In the upper part of the



ducal estate, bordering upon Cumberland, are the lead mines of which his Grace is entire owner, leased to the London Lead Company and other lessees, upon terms that will presently be mentioned. Here most of the agricultural tenants are connected in some way or other with the mining interest. A few years have witnessed great improvements and alterations in this part of the property. Large sums have been expended in the rebuilding of dwelling-houses, in the laying down of main roads, in the reclamation of land by drainage, planting, and enclosure. The result of these operations is that, as on the Scotch estates of the Duke of Sutherland, the whole surface of the country has been transformed, and what was once a barren solitude is a fertile and prosperous tract. The pasturage of this region has increased by the addition of hundreds of acres of grass, while thrice the number of cattle which it could formerly with difficulty support now crop its abundant herbage.

These works have been conducted greatly, of course, to the increased value of the property, at the expense, in the first instance, of the owner, and by workmen especially retained and employed for the purpose. It is the regular organisation of such a staff as this purpose requires which is the first thing noticeable in the management of the Raby property. There are distinct sets of workmen, regularly employed either at a weekly wage or else by piece-work, in separate yards in the immediate neighbourhood of the Castle. Close to the building is an enclosure in which are situated the house of the clerk of the works and several carpenters' and

joiners' shops. The work done here is exclusively devoted to the Castle itself, and has nothing to do with any of the operations on the general estate. At a little distance from this is a much larger yard, where the estate work proper is carried on. Here there are wheelwrights' stalls, carpenters' benches, and smiths' forges, where wood fences are made or repaired, carts mended and even manufactured. But the men thus employed represent only a small proportion of the permanent staff retained upon the Duke's estate. No visitor to Raby and its neighbourhood can fail to be struck by the admirable neatness with which the hedges are trimmed and the palings preserved, or by the excellence of the macadamised roads. This is entirely because the Duke of Cleveland keeps them in his own hands. A considerable contingent of men, skilled in everything that has to do with hedges, stone walls, fences, and highways, is perpetually at work. Any tenant may, on payment of their wages, avail himself of the services of these, the landlord having the satisfaction of knowing that the necessary repairs will be properly carried out. In the case of drainage the landlord bears the entire burden of the expenditure, charging the occupant of the soil interest, at five per cent., on the money expended upon the work. Inside Raby Park itself 900 acres of land are retained as a home farm, and not far from this is another farm of 500 acres, which, held by the Duke's agent, is intended as a model for the farmers of the surrounding district. Here, as elsewhere, the covenants between the landlord and the tenant are in the

shape of yearly agreements: the landlord reserves to himself the sole power to kill every kind of game, and the tenant knows that so long as he farms upon sound principles he enjoys practical fixity of tenure.

These different operations and properties have correspondingly distinct departments in the management of the Duke of Cleveland's estate, and the control over all is rigidly centralised in the office of the chief agent, which is within the castle walls, and from whom all authority issues. The system here pursued is more purely bureaucratic than in the case of either the Duke of Northumberland or the Duke of Devonshire. Instead of administering, like the latter, his estate by several agents of co-equal power, or, like the former, by a chief commissioner with immediate authority over a number of gentlemen, the Duke of Cleveland is directly represented only by one chief agent, who, without the same assistance from a staff of subordinate officials, is responsible for the control of the whole of what is called the "settled estate," and whose head-quarters are at Raby itself. Thither come all accounts in connection with the Shropshire, Staffordshire, and Northamptonshire properties to be audited, nor would the agents or bailiffs on any of these engage in any considerable enterprise without communicating with the chief agent or with the Duke himself. Weekly and monthly returns are made at Raby by the forester and his staff, by the hedging and draining staff, by the foreman of the labourers employed on the home farm. and by the controllers of the house, park, and gardens. Entries

are made of all in ledgers kept with the greatest neatness and nicety; a brief abstract is prepared at the end of the financial year and submitted to the landlord. There are other features in the administration of this admirably managed property which deserve mention. Rents are paid in twice a year, first by the tenants to the Duke's head representative, secondly by the agents to the Duke's bankers. But from the total of this rental there has, before it reaches the ducal coffers, been previously deducted the expenditure upon repairs and permanent improvements, according to the estimate which, at the beginning of the financial year, has been submitted to his Grace. The expenses, therefore, of the estate are really paid before their proprietor is in receipt of his revenues, and all those revenues, in the shape in which they eventually come to him, represent a margin of clear profit.

The Raby estate office is also the head-quarters of the administration of the mines and quarries. For the conduct of all of these, or rather for the incoming from them of the royalty for which the Duke has let them to lessees, the chief agent is personally responsible. As this gentleman contrives to keep the territorial dominion of the Duke of Cleveland in a highly satisfactory condition, with only an estate bailiff as a general overseer under him, so by the simple instrumentality of a mineral bailiff, he effectually protects the interests of the Duke, vested in coal, lead, iron mines, and stone quarries. On special occasions, when the produce of a mine is weighed, the mineral

bailiff is personally present, but the general plan is for the authorities of the mine to forward to the Raby estate office an estimate of its yield, the Duke's agent having it in his power to examine the company's books as a check upon their figures.

As has been already remarked, there are few exceptions to the rule in the case of the great landed estates, that while a limited staff of workmen is permanently retained for doing jobs in connection with the house of the great landowner, most of the work is performed by contract with local mechanics and artisans. Thus, the Duke of Devonshire, whose properties, if their acreage is not so extensive as the Duke of Northumberland's, are much more widely scattered, keeps a small contingent of plumbers comfortably housed above the stables at Chatsworth, while in the adjoining wood-yard, house-joiners and estate-joiners are settled.

The Duke of Devonshire himself undertakes the execution of all repairs for the tenants on his estate—a plan which has the great advantage, that under its operation there are no perpetual claims upon the landlord for improvements. It is a marked feature on the Duke of Devonshire's Derbyshire, Yorkshire, and Lancashire properties, that in very many instances as much as two acres of land is attached to the labourers' cottages. This not merely gives them constant occupation of a profitable kind, enabling them often to keep a couple of cows, but attaches them to their homes, and invests their homes with a special

and enduring interest. It has been the immemorial custom on the Devonshire estates to let farms by annual agreement, subject to a re-valuation at the end of every twenty-one years.

This arrangement comes to very much the same thing as a lease for that term. The tenants know perfectly well that so long as they do their duty by the land they will not receive notice to quit; and here, as elsewhere, the archives of the estate show many cases in which farms have been in possession of the same families, from father to son, for many generations, and not unfrequently for two or three centuries.

When the re-valuation is made, a full report of the condition of all the farms and other portions of the property is drawn up. Anything that can throw light upon the management of a particular holding, and the qualities displayed by a particular tenant, are duly noted down, as, also, are the improvements which it may be considered desirable to institute, or which the tenant himself may have suggested as necessary. It is then for the Duke and his agents to consider whether the property shall remain in the same hands, and what repairs shall be effected. In consideration of such repairs as may finally be carried out, either a permanent addition is made to the rent, or else the tenant is charged a percentage on the money expended.

The estates of the Duke of Devonshire lying in several counties, it would not be practicable to apply to them the principle of concentration which works

so well in the domains of the Dukes of Cleveland and Northumberland. Such a thing as an absolutely best system of territorial administration is no more possible than an absolutely best form of government; and just as the relations between the great landlord and his agents will depend upon the degree of mutual knowledge and confidence, so the principle on which estates are controlled will be fixed by their geographical peculiarities. The Duke of Northumberland is a territorial magnate who has one prime minister as his commissioner, and as much may be said of the Dukes of Westminster and Cleveland. The Duke of Devonshire has probably more than half a dozen responsible controllers, each independent of the other, possessed of co-equal and co-ordinate powers, and each communicating directly with him. These gentlemen make reports to his Grace on the condition and requirements of their separate departments, but only at intervals of nearly a year, and not on paper only or chiefly, but in personal conversation. The business year begins and ends at different times on the different properties, and consequently the season of the annual audit of each is different too. Like the Duke of Northumberland, the Duke of Devonshire owns not merely many varieties of farms as well as mines and mills, but a prosperous and thriving township. His Grace, indeed, has two watering-places in which his power is supreme—one the inland spa of Buxton, the other Eastbourne on the south coast. At both of these places the land is let out for building purposes, the

landlord—as was the case with the Duke of Northumberland at Tynemouth—permitting no house or structure of any kind to be erected which has not received his approval or that of his responsible agents.

Such is a synoptical view of the natural characteristics, and the general principles of management, of three or four of the largest properties in England—the Westminster, Northumberland, Cleveland, and Devonshire estates. There are other general features in the administration of English properties which might be studied with advantage by many continental landlords. The strictest method is, as we have seen, the very soul of the organisation, and the archives of the property are preserved as carefully, and are in their way as important, as those of a department of the public service. There are, in the case of every well-conducted property, piles of agreements between landlord and tenants; tin cases containing the budgets of the property for a long series of years; estimates of expenditure, monthly and annual; masses of manuscript containing the data on which these estimates are drawn up, abstracts of accounts, with marginal references to ledger folios, and a perfect library of volumes made up of the correspondence between the landlord and his agents on the affairs of his estate for a number of years. And there are other official papers than these relating to the administration of the property. One is “A Return of the Progress of New Erections, Alterations, and Repairs made under the Superintendence” of the architect for the estate in any given month. It is



in effect a little manuscript book in which is noted the progress that has been made in the works undertaken on the different holdings, the sums that have been actually expended, and the further sums which it is estimated will yet have to be expended—first, in the course of next month ; secondly, in the course of the next year. Some at least of these figures—those which indicate the sums estimated as necessary during the coming month—have a place in another printed form, “*Estimate of Expenditure.*” On this sheet there are further entries, such as “*Additions and Repairs,*” “*Household Gardens and Pleasure Grounds.*”

There is yet another class of documents, of even greater importance than any which we have yet examined. They are those which lay down in legal phraseology the relations existing between landlord and tenant. Here there is no absolute uniformity, but there, as we have seen, is an approach to uniformity. There is a general indisposition on the part of landlords to grant leases or to contract except out of the *Agricultural Holdings Act*. Some landlords there are who give their tenants the option of a lease or an annual agreement, and some who permit to them the right of killing ground game. But as a rule the tenure of farms on the great estates is a matter of annual agreement. Improvements in the way of drainage, buildings, roads, and fences are either done at the expense of the landlord, or if the tenant immediately defrays their cost he receives compensation from the landlord. In all leases there are special clauses

reserving to the landlord property in the minerals under the surface of the soil. The landlord stipulates that the farmhouse shall be regularly inhabited by the tenant. The cost of repairs is generally a matter of private arrangement between landlord and tenant, but in the majority of cases it is upon the shoulders of the former that the greater part of the burden falls.

The great estates do not always have as their owners titled or untitled proprietors. The Crown and the Ecclesiastical Commissioners are at the present moment the most extensive landed proprietors in England, having the management of properties with a rental of upwards of £400,000, situated in all parts of the United Kingdom. These are administered upon practically the same principles which obtain in the case of the large landed nobility. The responsible agents are two eminent firms, officially designated as surveyors, one of whose jurisdiction is the north, and the other the south, of that portion of Great Britain which is this side of the Tweed. These have head offices in London, a large staff of clerks, secretaries, and architects, and a variety of local bailiffs. Each of the surveyors is constantly travelling, receives frequent reports from his local agents, and communicates a general statement of affairs to the Commission, to which he may be said to stand in nearly the same relation that a managing director does to the other members of a business firm. Under the present Ecclesiastical Commission the value of the Church lands has nearly doubled in the course of

thirty years. The surveyors are constantly in communication with the chief agents of the great private estates of England, and are quick to adopt any improvement which suggests itself as desirable or practicable. The government of properties which are in the possession of the great City Guilds is, for the most part, equally excellent and effective, and in this case, too, the method adopted is that in force upon the large estates which we have seen.

It must not be supposed that these immense properties, which are in their way principalities, are the only instances of first-rate estate management in England. Many of the smaller properties of country gentlemen and of noblemen are controlled with an efficiency and ability that leave nothing to be wished. The same amount of organisation there cannot be, for the simple reason that the opportunity and necessity for it do not exist. Neither can it generally be expected that the labourers' cottages, the hedges, draining, and roads, should be in the same perfect condition in these as in the case of the kingdom of a great territorial noble. Uniform and considerable improvement there has ever here been; but where the supply of capital is necessarily limited, operations cannot be conducted on the same extensive and magnificent scale. In comparatively few estates with a rental of less than £10,000 a year does the landlord keep a chief agent, who is exclusively devoted to the affairs of his property. In many cases where the revenue is much in excess of this sum the agent charged with the

superintendence of one property is responsible also for the control of a second or a third. There is, indeed, always resident on the estate a bailiff of considerable knowledge, and eminently trustworthy, who duly reports on the condition of affairs, either to the agent, or possibly to the landlord himself. When the estate is a much smaller one, say from £3,000 to £7,000 per annum, the official who receives the rents is probably an estate agent by profession, and has the charge of a great number of these domains, often at some distance from each other. Experience proves the wisdom of employing such a representative in the management of estate business, and experience also proves that the attempt to delegate the authority which that management implies to the bailiff, who is in social station inferior in all probability to the tenants, does not answer well. The custom, which was once common, of placing estates in the management of county solicitors, is gradually falling into desuetude, though still very far from being obsolete.

## CHAPTER IV.

### RURAL ADMINISTRATION.

Government of an English Village—Elections of Guardians of the Poor expected—Local Interest taken—Extent to which Boards of Guardians have assumed Powers previously vested in the Vestry—Candidates for the Election, and Principles at issue—Defective Sense of Personal Responsibility and Duties of Citizenship among all Classes of Englishmen—Influence of Great Nobles on Squirearchy, and indirectly upon Boards of Guardians—Meeting of the Board—Kinds of Business discussed, and various Functions discharged—Magistrates at Quarter Sessions—Kinds of Business done, and Way in which it is done—Opportunities of the Institution, and some Reforms in it suggested.

It is the smaller squires, a gradually diminishing class, and the farmers, who do the daily work of the government of rural England, and who form the rank and file of the local officials. How does the administrative machinery thus constituted work when it is actually in motion?

It so happens that there is some little excitement noticeable in the village or parish which we are now visiting. During the past fortnight there has been much disputation, mainly of a personal character, among the ratepayers who compose the parish vestry; a good deal more, indeed, than might have been expected, seeing that the parish ratepayer has comparatively little authority himself directly to exercise. He has been compelled to acquiesce in the centralising tendencies of the times, and to delegate to a few trusted individuals the power which was once absolutely

deposited in his own person. Every parish officer, Mr. C. S. Read said not long ago in the House of Commons, has been disestablished in the last fifty years except the parson. The remark is scarcely an exaggeration. The churchwardens continue to exist, but their sphere is purely ecclesiastical; the parish constable became an anachronism by the Act of 1872, though the gradual disuse in practice of his office may be traced to the at first gradual, and then compulsory, institution of a county police force, dating from about 1850, or a little later; the overseers are only officials for, in technical parlance, "making" the rate, for which the guardians, like county justices, merely issue a precept. It may be mentioned, however, that the overseers have also one other important function: they make up, in the first instance, the roll or ratable property which, subject to the revision of the Assessment Committee, determines the assessment of the parish. In various valuation bills it has been proposed to give them the aid of the surveyor of taxes in doing this, but they do not like the idea, which will in all probability ere long be carried out, while there are proposals to abolish their assessment functions altogether.

The miniature image of our representative system may be seen in the English village, and it is a question of representation which is now exercising the little community. The parish is one of about twenty\* in the district which are about to send a delegate to a body that,

\* There are 15,000 parishes and 650 unions in England—hence the average is about 23 parishes to a union, some unions have 40 or 50, and there are others with as many as 70 or 90.

with more appropriateness than the vestry, may be called the local Parliament—the Board of Guardians. The principle at issue is one of real importance, and considerable interest has been taken in the names inscribed on the nomination papers, which have been already forwarded to the clerk of the Board. Every voter, in other words every ratepayer, has a right of nomination, and, exercising this right, a simple agricultural labourer has had the audacity to propose a gentleman—perhaps the parson of the parish—who is known to look at affairs of local administration from a point of view that is not too popular in the neighbourhood. The miniature polity, in fact, is divided into parties by an embittered dispute as to whether the guardian to be elected shall be a candidate who is in favour of, or opposed to, the system of out-door relief; whether he shall be one who would make stricter regulations for securing the minimum of out-door relief by more rigidly enforcing the test of the “house;” whether, in other words, as we shall see hereafter, he is to be the advocate or antagonist of a practice which, as facts and figures abundantly prove, promotes chronic pauperism among the working classes, tends more than anything else to degrade the character of the lower orders, and absolves the higher from individual responsibility in relation to their humbler neighbours. Fifty years ago, this kind of contest was unknown in English village life. The autonomy of the parish was then unimpaired; the jurisdiction of the vestry, or, at least, of the overseers, who on this matter were the great parochial authority,

though under the old poor law they were sometimes over-ridden by the ruling power of the magistrates, was in theory absolute. During the greater portion of the first half of the present century, each parish not only had the management of its own poor, but also in matters relating to its sanitary condition its local taxation was a strictly self-governing institution. Roads are intentionally excluded from the above list, seeing that over 6,000 of the rural parishes of England (nearly half probably) retain their management of roads by elective parochial surveyors, and that highway districts are permissive only. One after another, these parochial prerogatives have been lost, and little more in the way of the active duties of administration is left to the vestry than the collection of rates which they have no power themselves to fix.

The Board of Guardians having concentrated in themselves the chief administrative and executive functions of the ratepayers, as well as having added to these other powers which overseers and vestry never possessed, it is natural that considerable local efforts should be made to influence its composition. Accordingly, when the village vestry met, a rather rare event, a couple of weeks since on parochial business, some allusion was made to the forthcoming contest, and the qualifications of the different candidates, which led to a keen and even acrimonious debate. Since then the discussion has been continued in the village tap-room, at cottage hearth-sides, in farmhouse yards, in the market towns, and wherever else the electors or their nominees



have happened to meet. The struggle, it is clear, lies between two competitors for the sometimes coveted distinction: a farmer of some substance, who, rising superior to the prejudices of many of his class, believes that out-door relief is an unmitigated mischief to the poor themselves, and a local publican in a brisk way of business, who regards all recipients of out-door relief as potential accessions to the ranks of his customers. It may be that there is a sentimental philanthropist who is also in the field, but he will only divide one party or the other, and the election mainly reduces itself to a struggle between the principles that have been indicated.

Because the name of the parson has not been mentioned in connection with the competition, it by no means follows that he necessarily holds himself aloof from it. He may be a candidate himself; or he may, in his capacity of chairman of the vestry, which constitutes the electoral body, be using—as it is perfectly legitimate he should use—his influence in support of a particular candidate. After not a little experience he has come to the conclusion that the moral, social, and educational welfare of the neighbourhood is jeopardised by the indifference of the farmers, who compose the great majority of the Board, to the questions which very nearly concern them. For it is the farmers who are the real local legislators of rural England, and the British farmer who takes an extensive, a liberal, and an enlightened view of the duties of his position is less commonly met with than might be wished. To put it

differently, he seldom proposes to himself a higher standard of responsibility than that which is common to his class; and to say this is to bring no worse charge against him than that he regards existence and its duties from the same point of view as do most of his social betters. The conception of the duties of citizenship has yet to be quickened among all classes of the community.

The great local magnate, the representative of monarchy in his own provincial world, the apex and figure-head of English local government—the Lord Lieutenant of the county himself—sets the example which the squirearchy imitate, and to which the yeomanry unconsciously conform. The Lord Lieutenant is a nobleman of great wealth and birth, of blameless reputation, of beneficent intentions. He is the patron of local societies, of schools, of charitable institutions beyond number. He is generous, philanthropic, and probably something of an autocrat. He contributes largely to the support of all local movements, if they are in what he considers “the right direction;” whether they are right he claims himself to decide, and the principle of their conduct he rigidly prescribes. If a neighbourhood in which he has property wants a dole out of the great man’s purse to enable it to build a school, he will take the whole expenditure upon his own hands, and will start the parents and ratepayers of the district with a school building complete down to the smallest particular. But he will do this only on condition that the inhabitants should adopt a School Board

immediately, or should pledge themselves not to adopt it, according to the colour of his political opinions. And in seventy-five cases out of a hundred the great man carries his point. The demagogues of the village beer-shops, and revolutionary tillers or tenants of the soil, may talk as they will, but the "Castle"—if such be the name and style of the ancestral dwelling of the great—has but to express its wish, the wish becomes law, and eager effect is given to the law by the veriest Thersites of the district. The son of our typical potentate is not perhaps a young man of great natural aptitude for affairs, and he is certainly the professor of an anti-popular and exclusive political creed. But his sire considers that the time has arrived when he should represent a division of the county in Parliament, and a meeting is accordingly held at which it is unanimously decided that the noble lord is the only eligible candidate. The resolution is proposed by one Boanerges, who has recently been inveighing in his own circle against the influence of the territorial aristocracy, and has been seconded by another who is locally credited with an aim and mission of a still more subversive character.

All this, it may be said, is as it should be, and if all that could be advanced against the duke, marquis, or earl, who is the king of the county, were that he was an amiable despot, it would amount to very little. But he is also, unfortunately, for the most part an absentee, and when he is at home he is apt to be too much occupied with his guests, his foxhounds, and his battues, to attend to the more irksome responsibilities

of vast possessions. There are certain ancestral charities on his estate which must be kept up, and his agent has to keep them up accordingly. There are certain institutions in his villages known as almshouses, which have been endowed from generation to generation by charges on the great man's estate, and he ignores the fact that these establishments are for the most part hotbeds of pauperism, and of helpless, hopeless want. It is not to his taste to take a leading part in the business of the county, and accordingly the gentry who live about him, the squires of various degrees of wealth and dignity, practise a similar abstention. If his grace or his lordship goes to a county meeting, then the minor territorial rulers, the untitled squires, will go also, because, in conventional parlance, it is "the right thing to do." But the country gentlemen, being in the great majority of instances magistrates, are *ex officio* members of the local Board of Guardians—are, in fact, in virtue of their position, responsible for the pauperism, the financial, the sanitary, and the educational state of the neighbourhood. Their power for good or evil is practically unlimited, and if it is to be for good, it must be actively exercised, and its active exercise means constant attendance at the meetings of the Board, not merely rare periodical appearances for the purposes of patronage, or perfunctory participation in the discharge of the functions of the magisterial bench. If, therefore, our local Parliaments sometimes do their work imperfectly, it must be borne in mind that the cause of their defects is closely associated with a hundred deeply

rooted habits and traditional prejudices. What is wanted is a keener and wider conception of duty, and if the parish parson can help to create such a sentiment, and actively make it felt either at the election of Guardians or at the meeting of the Board itself, happy is he, and well will it be for the neighbourhood.

Meanwhile the election itself is over; the new Board of Guardians is complete, and its sittings have begun. The magistrates, parsons, farmers, tradesmen, and publicans who constitute the Board—if it happens, indeed, to include so many varieties of English life—have come together on the occasion of one of their weekly meetings, at the regular place of rendezvous. There is plenty of business to discuss, and there is likely to be some rather sharp debating of the rougher sort. The chairman, it may possibly be, is not quite punctual in his arrival at the scene of action, and it is beginning to be a question whether his place will not have to be filled by deputy. He comes at last, genially apologetic or transparently indifferent, as the case may be; a representative English gentleman, more at home in the field than in the council-chamber, and slightly disposed, perhaps, to push the principle of leaving well, or perhaps bad, alone, further than might seem desirable even to some languid reformers. He owns a fair property in the neighbourhood, is honestly desirous to do his duty, and believes that on the whole this duty is best done by allowing matters pretty much to take their own course.

Contrast with him yonder clerical member of the

Board, who sees in it a great agency for effecting those reforms which have, as he believes, a directly religious sanction. He is a gentleman of some determination, knows what he means, and has a tolerably clear idea as to the manner in which what he wants is to be secured. There is a look about his eyes which stamps upon him as clearly as could words the legend, "No surrender!" On his face there are visible those lines of quiet resolution which proclaim that, if fighting is necessary, fight he will. He is noticeable in many respects among his colleagues in the Board-room: the petty squire, in somewhat straitened circumstances, who has just strolled in, but who has no idea in particular, and who is secretly absorbed in calculating whether he can afford a house in London during the coming season, or a continental trip in the autumn; the publican or tradesman, who, compliant and servile in his business, has views of his own, which he intends to stand up for among his brother guardians; the ordinary specimen of the British farmer, whose notions are summed up in the simple formula that nothing must be done which seems to threaten an increase of the rates. He has allies and he has enemies at the Board. If there are those who see in our parson an intermeddler, there are those also who know that he is earnestly and courageously working out a faith which, in process of time, is destined, if effect be given to it, to lighten the earth by removing from its surface several tons of human misery. It may also be that more than one of the landowners in the district not only recognises

but utilises the opportunities of his position, and is a member of the Board in reality as well as in name; or that among the farmers there are some who actively sympathise with the good work. Lastly, there are few Boards of Guardians which do not count among their members one or two of the smaller kind of tradesmen, who are at once the most fussy and revolutionary of the body.

What is the work on which our guardians are engaged to-day? It may belong to one or several of many varieties, for the functions of guardians are only less numerous and complicated than the authorities under which the inhabitant of a rural parish lives. The simple English villager is the creature of a highly complex *économie*. He may be defined as one who lives in a parish, in a union, in a highway district, or in a county, according to the point of view which is taken, while in three of these he always is. It is, further, far from unlikely that he should be subject to six kinds of authority—the Local Board, the vestry—whose officers, as we have seen, are the overseers—the School Board, the Highway Board, the guardians, and the justices. As is the multiplicity in the possible modes of government with which he is acquainted, such, or almost such, may be that of the taxation which he has to pay, even much of this taxation, so far as it is levied for local purposes, is called by the generic name of “Poor Rate.”\* Three kinds of authority there are

\* Although by no means the whole of taxation for local purposes is comprised under the name of Poor Rate, that rate does generally comprise

which are universal from one end of England to the other: the poor law authority, the highway authority, and most noticeable of all, the sanitary authority. The bodies exercising these powers in town and country are not the same, but there is no corner of the land over which they are not spread. In rural districts, such as that which we are now considering, the sanitary authority is the Board of Guardians, and we may suppose that it is a sanitary question which engages its attention to-day.

Our guardians then, let it be understood, have considered the reports of particular cases of distress made to them by their agents, the relieving officers; have disposed of sundry demands for out-door relief; have decided what admissions shall be made to the workhouse itself. In their capacity of guardians of the poor pure and simple they have thus exhausted the catalogue of their duties. But they have much else to think of. In some instances they have the functions of a School Board to discharge, as members of the local School Attendance Committee; they have to revise valuation lists; they have to look closely after sanitary matters, and to consider the reports of paid sanitary officers. They may be sitting in full conclave, or as members of one of the committees to which they have delegated their functions. Their business, we will assume, on the

the County or Borough Rate, the School Board Rate (in rural districts), the Sanitary General Rate, and where Highway Boards exist it will include the Highway Rate. In other cases, the Highway Rate is a wholly separate charge; and so, where it exists, is the rate levied by Local Boards.



present occasion is sanitary. They have received the unwelcome intelligence that a deadly epidemic has broken out at some point in the union area, and shows every disposition to spread; or they have reason to fear that the drainage is not quite satisfactory; or they are puzzled to know why the sanguine anticipations of their medical officer should be falsified with such lamentable emphasis by results. One of their number ventures to suggest that perhaps the reason is to be found in the fact that they push the doctrine of delegated responsibility to an indefensible extent. And in truth there may be something in the theory. They have entrusted to a medical expert, paid by a handsome salary, duties which it would be infinitely better they should fulfil themselves. The medical expert has assured them that all is right, but there can be nothing more unconscionable or perverse in their action than the pestilences and sicknesses to which humanity is heir. One guardian has every reason to believe that the district in question is from a hygienic point of view all that could be desired. It is true, for some time past there has been a nasty sore-throat about, but then it is in the air. It may be that the drainage is defective, but then our guardian will argue that the most perfect drainage in the world cannot make the unclean clean, though he omits to notice the truth that when pollution is systematically promoted by imperfect drainage, cleanliness is impossible.

Much ingenuity is expended in framing hypotheses to explain the origin of the evil; more money is voted

for patent drainage pipes ; the experienced medical officer is exhorted to keep his eyes particularly wide open. Everything, in brief, is done but the one thing necessary. The guardians, who constitute the sanitary authority, are not persuaded that so long as they abdicate in any degree their own personal functions a satisfactory result is impossible ; and that, if they would insure the neighbourhood against noxious maladies generated by preventible causes, they must not fear to thrust their presence into unlovely corners, or to hold their nostrils above unsavoury smells. It is in sanitary matters as it is in matters of pauperism, and as it is to some extent in educational matters : the sense of individual and personal responsibility is lacking, and the vigorous spirits are few and far between that bring the need of the sense of responsibility home to those breasts from which it should never be absent. The machinery which, it may be argued, ought to have this effect is at work—that is, the Local Boards are responsible to the central government. The Local Government Board in London demands and receives statements of annual income and expenditure from the Board of Guardians in the country, despatches its inspectors to report on all they see or can ascertain, only helps the local authorities with loans at three and a half per cent. when the purpose for which the loan is wanted has received its official approval. Yet something more, it is plain, than this is necessary if we are to see uniformity of law or practice established at our Boards of Guardians, and if the customs of one Board are to be brought into any degree of accord with

those of another only five miles off. On the representation of their medical officer, the guardians give instructions that drains shall be enlarged, or that new sewers shall be made. It is obvious that the benefit of these reforms, while in a general sense felt by the whole community, is specially and immediately experienced by the landlords of houses. A well-drained tenement has a higher marketable value, commands a greater rental than one which is ill-drained, and the better drainage is no sooner effected than the rental goes up accordingly. Naturally the consequence of this is to diminish the sense of responsibility which attaches to the landlords; and thus the many are taxed for the direct and peculiar aggrandisement of the few.

Thus much of vestries and Boards of Guardians. We rise gradually to a higher sphere, and approach a more august authority, the County Magistrates assembled in the Court of Quarter Sessions. Of the duties of magistrates, or, to give them their more dignified title, Justices of the Peace, in Petty Sessions, more will be said elsewhere. There are in all some 820 Petty Sessional divisions in England and Wales, which only accidentally correspond with any other areas, and which come within the jurisdiction of these unpaid administrators of the law. The business of Petty Sessions is purely judicial, and comprises all such minor cases as can be summarily disposed of without the summoning of a jury. But it is not the privilege or the duty of attending Petty Sessions, and dealing out immediate retributive vengeance to trespassers and

perpetrators of larcenies of the lesser kind, that makes the position of a County Magistrate enviable in the eyes of the ordinary Englishman. As Boards of Guardians have spoiled the vestries of their authority, so now is there an organised movement to rob the magistrates of most or all of the prerogatives which they prize. The centralising tendency of the times is irresistible, and when the establishment of County Boards has reduced the administrative power of the justices to zero, the ancient glory of Quarter Sessions will be gone, and one of the main reasons of the applications now made to the Lord Lieutenant of the County for the Commission of the Peace will be found to have disappeared. The Court of Quarter Sessions is a grand judicial tribunal, but the fame which Quarter Sessions bestows on country gentlemen comes from their achievements less in the judicial than the administrative field; and when magistrates cease to manage the business of their county, they will cease also to care for its official honours. At present, however, that is a contingency of the future. Quarter Sessions may be menaced, like much else, with disestablishment. Meanwhile the Court exists, and the right to affix the letters "J.P." to one's name is yet esteemed a distinction. It is respectable, it is ancient, it is closely associated with territorial position and proprietorship. It is, therefore, held out as an inducement to the gentlemen who, having made their fortunes in trade, desire to purchase estates in the country, by the ingenious agents who make their profit out of such negotiations. Here is a copy of a

lithographed circular which not long ago accompanied the glowing description of a Lancashire property then in the market:—"A high social prestige attaches itself to the purchaser of this estate, as there is no resident squire in this or the adjacent parish. There is no superfluity of magistrates in the district, and the honourable office of Justice of the Peace would most undoubtedly be conferred on the new owner after the lapse of a decent interval of time."\*

This cunningly devised statement supplies, perhaps, the one consideration which was wanting to make Mercator close the bargain. He becomes duly installed in the great house, and "after a decent interval" is an applicant for the honour of the County Magistracy. The application, however, is not made in his own person. Etiquette requires that the request shall be vicariously made to the Lord Lieutenant of the County, and if that eminent personage views it with favour, the request is practically granted—practically, but not according to the letter of the law. In law the refusal or the bestowal of the honour rests with the Crown, advised by the Lord High Chancellor. As a matter of fact, it is the Lord Chancellor who appoints, and the Lord Lieutenant who recommends. Cases, indeed, are not unknown in which the authority of these two dignitaries comes into collision. A district memorialises the keeper of the monarch's conscience against the ratification of the Lord Lieutenant's nomination, or an individual appeals to

\* This is a literal extract from a circular in my possession.

the Lord Chancellor against his rejection by the Lord Lieutenant. But, as a rule, the system works harmoniously, and in rural England the doctrine may be said to be firmly established that the administration of the law—like the administration of other local business—shall follow the ownership of the land. Lords Lieutenant of counties take different views of their responsibility in recommending candidates for the magistracy. Political and religious motives have their full weight given them, and Nonconformist and Liberal justices would be at a discount in a strong Tory shire. Others, again, are disposed to take the qualification of magistrates aspirant as sufficiently proved by the partial certification of the friend who mentions them. Others institute a just and critical inquiry into personal aptitude as well as social claims. Others carry circumspectness to the verge of caprice, and at the same time that they appoint a magistrate, gratify a crotchet.

But all this time the Court of Quarter Sessions has been assembling in the county town, and the justices are entering the chamber in which the decrees are to be registered that will constitute for the next three months the law of their little province. It is a long, lofty room, down whose centre runs a long green-baize-covered table, which manifestly means business. In they come, the men of metal and many acres, from the Marquis of Carabas down to the well-to-do country farmer. Here is the representative of a house which has been settled in the neighbourhood for upwards of a century, and whose first founders helped to conquer

the kingdom for William the Norman. Here, too, is the gentleman who represents the principle of plutocracy, and who is a new-comer from Liverpool or Threadneedle Street. Then there are the county squires, big and small, a few professional gentlemen, one or two retired military and naval officers, a few clergymen, and several younger sons of great noblemen.

It is the affairs of the county, and not the administration of the law, which now concern them. They have met, not to try prisoners, but to test accounts, and to discuss local matters, and the chances are that they will display much ability, industry, and shrewdness in the conduct of the various business. There is, perhaps, more than one gentleman present to-day who thinks that Quarter Sessions are not what they were, and dwells with admiring regret on the composition and the procedure of the court in the fine old time now gone. The speeches made, the counsel given, the masterly manner in which everything was done, were worthy then of the Imperial Parliament at Westminster, for the simple reason that the most prominent men at Quarter Sessions were the master-minds of St. Stephen's. It is not impossible that the local court contained one or two Cabinet Ministers as its active members. Probably a clear majority of those who did the real work of the meeting had seats in the House of Commons or House of Lords, and were versed in the art of political management, which experience of these assemblages is calculated to

teach. It may be that the chairman of the court was none other than the Speaker of the Lower House of Parliament, the first Commoner, and the best shot, of England; or that the justice who presided over his brother justices to-day was the statesman who had saved an entire political party from catastrophe last week.\*

Be this as it may, there they were. Peers, Cabinet or ex-Cabinet Ministers, members of the House of Commons, squires big and small, professional men, parsons, a yeoman or two, gathered together to transact the business of the county. The conference was as salutary as its results were effective. It was an education for many; it was an advantage to all. It disciplined and cultivated the minds of the country gentlemen who spent their time amid their paternal acres. It brought distinct classes into contact; it smoothed off angularities of character; it taught moderation, tact, discretion. These are virtues still inherent in the institution, but they fail to impress the spectator in the same degree. In a majority of English counties Quarter Sessions are not what they were. The members of Parliament, the eminent statesmen, the Cabinet Ministers, will be looked for in vain. The naval and military half-pay officers are more numerous, and if they are also commendably energetic, are not generally thought correctly to understand the genius of the place. The smaller country squires are a class that is rapidly

\* Among contemporary Cabinet Ministers who are or have been Chairmen of Quarter Sessions are the late Mr G Ward Hunt, Lord Carnarvon, Mr. R. A. Cross, Lord Salisbury, Sir Stafford Northcote, Lord Derby, Lord Hampton.



dying out. The larger country squires and great nobles have other things to do. The representatives of commerce and plutocracy have gained a preponderating voice. Finally, the sphere of the operations of Quarter Sessions has been materially contracted, generally by the fact that all eyes are now turned to London, and specially by the transfer of prisons to the State, with only a remnant of supervisional powers left to the justices.

The mere meeting in Quarter Sessions is only a small part of the work which falls to their share. There are still many very important matters brought up by notices of motion, and young men still find in the sessions the opportunity of winning their spurs. Throughout the year some, at least, of them are hard at work on committees charged with the consideration and adjustment of finance, with the special investigation of county bridges, shire halls, county buildings, police, asylums, licensing, the execution of the Contagious Diseases (Animals) Act, the Weights and Measures Acts, the Sale of Food and Drugs Act, and the control of minor local authorities. Lunatic asylums, police, bridges, and licensing are the subjects which are most keenly discussed.\* Reports of committees in all these matters are read and debated, the report which is first taken being that of the committee of finance. There is the county rate to be fixed, and it is these reports which regulate its amount. The committee has been ascertaining the total of the net

\* Roads, except where quasi-judicial Acts are required, or an adoption of the Highway Act is proposed, seldom give rise to much debate.

rateable value of the parishes which make up the county aggregate, and the guardians have been estimating the amount wanted for poor relief. Thus there is a long array of figures to come before the justices in the Court of Quarter Sessions assembled. It is, in fact, a kind of local budget, which is read, and when read and sanctioned, the guardians have to supply the funds, which are raised by the rates that the overseers collect.\*

Such, in outline, is the system which it is now in contemplation materially to modify. The general arguments on which such a change is based are, first, the disregard of the representative principle in this department of the national life; secondly, the economy, as well as the simplicity, which would result from the substitution of one authority for several. Now, as regards the former of these points, it is the fact that the Village Reeves, and Port Reeves, who corresponded to our County and Borough Justices, were at the Anglo-Saxon period chosen by popular election. This custom disappeared to a great extent at the Conquest; but even as late as the 28th Edward I. an Act was passed, asserting for the people the right of the election of sheriffs in every shire "if they list;" nor was the

\* The magistrates in Quarter Sessions have, as such, neither knowledge of nor any concern with the sums required by the guardians. All that comes before them is simply the County and Police Rates: thus their finance deals with by far the most insignificant portion of the local funds. The County and Police Rate may be only about 5d. in the pound, the charges borne by the ratepayer in consequence of calls for guardians, Highway, and School, &c., authorities will be about 2s. 6d. or 3s. in the pound. The County Assessment Committee does assess the county, but their valuation is only used for County Rate.

right taken away before the 9th Edward II., on the plea of the dangers of "tumultuous assembling." As regards the justices or conservators of the peace, they were elected by the freeholders of the county up to the commencement of the reign of Edward III., when that monarch took the commission of the peace into his own hands, and at the present moment the coroner is the only ancient officer whose election is vested immediately in the people or freeholders. The desuetude into which the representative principle has fallen in county matters is aggravated by the fact that, while the population is growing in density and concentration, there exists no satisfactory method of taking its voice in local affairs. The Lord Lieutenant, indeed, has the power of convening the county by special summons. Theoretically, also, presentations, or statements of grievances, may still be made to the grand juries of the county at Assizes and Quarter Sessions. But the first of these expedients is only resorted to for the relief of public feeling when it is profoundly moved, and is inapplicable for the sober discussion of business; the second, the presentations, seldom get farther than the court to which they are presented.

It is the multiplicity of concurrent authorities, and all the confusion which this concurrence generates, the independence and the consequent conflict of local governing bodies, which are the chief causes of mischief and inconvenience. This distribution of powers is equally fatal to efficiency and unfair to the ratepayer.

“If,” as is stated by Mr. R. S. Wright in the admirable memorandum on the subject of local government drawn up by him under the supervision of Mr. Rathbone and Mr. Whitbread, “one simple unit of local government were adopted for all purposes, there would be a single governing body, elected at one time, and in one manner, and by one constituency; and this body, by itself or by its committees, would manage all the affairs of the locality on consistent principles; its proceedings would be subject to effective control by the ratepayers, and last, though not least, it would have one budget of expenditure and debt of the whole locality.” We should, in fact, get rid of the perplexing distribution of action between overseers, guardians, Highway Boards, Burial Boards, Justices of the Peace. Simplification would bring with it to the ratepayer the power of control. It may further be regarded as desirable that there should be a channel of trustworthy communication between the ratepayers, the people, and the Local Government Board, the central authority. This there cannot be till we have genuinely representative as well as generally responsible local bodies. Once let these exist, with no needless impediments in the way of their good working, and the necessity for interference by the central authority will be diminished, while the use and value of the information which it can furnish will be materially increased. The balance will, in fact, be struck finally and satisfactorily between independence judiciously regulated and perpetual anarchy, from which there can be no outcome but severe centralisation.

It is impossible to discuss this part of the subject without briefly glancing at the objections which are taken to the discharge of their purely judicial duties by magistrates who have no special legal knowledge, and who, when abstruse points of law arise, are obliged to trust to the wisdom and experience of their clerk. Here again it must be allowed that the censors of the existing régime have, to a certain extent, antiquity on their side. The original statute of 1 Edward III., which gave the right of the nomination of justices to the Crown, provides that they (the justices) should be "good men and lawful"—skilled in law. A later statute, 34 Edward III., ordains that one lord with three or four men of the best reputation, together with men learned in the law, should be assigned to each county. Various statutes were passed in the reign of Richard II., enacting that the justices should be selected from "the most sufficient knights, esquires, and men of the law." As a definite property qualification was not determined till the reign of Henry VI., it follows that for nearly two centuries good reputation and legal learning were the two necessary and qualifying attributes of justices. Nor even did the property qualification, fixed at the possession of lands or tenements of the annual value of £20, abrogate the condition of legal learning. And it was a condition which, as a matter of fact, continued to be required till the days of George II., when the qualification was altered to its present form—landed property of the clear annual value of £20, or the immediate reversion of lands of the annual value of £300.

Those who are dissatisfied with the existing system of administration in country districts declare that there can be no guarantee of impartial justice where the judges are personally acquainted with the parties, and where the same persons practically do duty as judges and prosecutors. All county justices are *ex officio* guardians of the union in which they reside; the chairman of the Board of Guardians being, perhaps, usually a squire. The same individual who hears from the Clerk of the Guardians the particulars about a defaulter charged with neglect of his relatives, and orders the defaulter in question to be prosecuted, may, as a justice, in a few days be sitting in judgment on him. Again, it is urged, the justices being country gentlemen, and game preservers, have a direct interest in putting down poaching. But recent legislation (the objection continues) has recognised the inexpediency of allowing magistrates to adjudicate in special cases in which they have a class interest. Thus, no millowner can hear a charge under the Factory Acts; no mine-owner under the Mines Inspection Act; no miller can adjudicate under the Bread and Flour Act; no brewer and distiller can take part in the granting of licences. Why, then, should game preservers try game stealers? This, it is said, is an anomaly; and it is an anomaly which causes a suspicion of and disrespect for what is sometimes stigmatised as "justices' justice" in the rural mind.

Further, it is asked, is it in human nature for an amiable, tender-hearted country gentleman not

educated in the stern traditions of legal impartiality, to decide without any bias in favour of the man whom he knows as an orderly, well-behaved, sober peasant, if the case brought before him is that of a quarrel between such a one and a dissolute “ne’er-do-weel?” As regards the statement, which is sometimes urged as a sufficient vindication of the institution of an unpaid magistracy in country districts, that the cases disposed of at Petty Sessions are so trivial and plain as to render precautions for insuring an absence of biassed opinion unnecessary, it must be remembered that small cases do not necessarily make easy law, and that a paltry perversion of justice may jeopardise the peace of a village. A well-known Indian official, of large judicial experience, once remarked that “any fool could try a murder—the evidence was usually so clear and direct—but that it took a born judge to distinguish between the merits of a despicable squabble between two ryots for possession of half an acre of land.” This argument is eminently applicable in the present instance, and it is certainly conceivable that the presence of a carefully trained legal intellect at Petty Sessions would be of material value. Of course the obvious and, as it may turn out to be, conclusive answer to the suggestion of a staff of stipendiaries in rural districts—going circuits after the fashion of county court judges—is the burden which would be placed on the rates or taxes. On the other hand, if this would give us a guarantee against the costly blunders which are now committed—if it would prevent the despatch

to prison of men only to be released immediately—to say nothing of the dangerous contempt into which, as a consequence, justice is brought—it is far from certain that a nominally extra expenditure might not mean a real retrenchment.



## CHAPTER V.

### MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT.

Local Boards—The New Relation between County Towns and Surrounding Neighbourhood—General Results of the Municipal Corporation Act—Relations between Municipal Governments and Central Government—The Mayoralty in London and in the Provinces—Town Councils—their Jurisdiction and Offices—Trades Councils—Debate in Town Council described—Educating Influences of the Life—Borough Magistrates—Politics in Municipal Matters—Citizenship in London and the Provinces—The Government of London—Possible Reforms

THE connecting-link between rural administration and municipal government is to be found in the institution known as the Local Board. This body is frequently to be met with in what are called populous places—districts, that is, in which some of the characteristics and feelings of country and town are combined, and which may be described as standing midway between the Vestry, or the Board of Guardians, and the Town Council. The Local Board is elected, as are the guardians, by the ratepayers of the community. Its members are charged with some of the functions of the guardians, and also, like the guardians, transact most of their business by committees. Upon them devolve the superintendence of roads and highways, responsibility for the sanitary condition of a district, for the removal of nuisances, and the general provision of fresh air and pure water. It remains for us to advance a step farther than this, and to cross the

interval which separates rural administration from genuine municipal administration; to quit the neighbourhood where matters are managed nearly as much by tradition and precedent as by principle, and visit the local capital, whose authorities are guided at all points by written law, and which is itself a miniature pattern of the realm. The village grows by imperceptible stages into the town, and urban institutions are established almost before one seems to have left the property of the rural squire. This interfusion is increased by the paramount influence which some of the great governing families of England exercise over its towns. The shadow of the castle or the abbey is projected over the borough; the political representation of the borough is often vested, and has been vested for generations, in the ruling family; the chief hotel of the place takes its title from the broad acres of the same great county house.

And yet there is a very visible difference between country town and country village life. There is scarcely a borough in England now which is not something of a manufacturing centre as well. New sources of mineral wealth are for ever being discovered beneath the surface of the inexhaustible soil; special virtues are found to reside in local fountains; sequestered vales are constantly proved to afford the most eligible sites for textile factories or brick-yards. It is the tendency of towns of all kinds to develop into trading centres—*depôts*, each of them, of some particular commerce. Whatever their produce may be, it is an

instinct with the producers to organise it, and to assert for themselves a distinct position in the great hierarchy of English traders. Thus, the place which thirty years ago was only the medium of distribution for local products in the locality itself, is now a kind of petty emporium of the empire, the head-quarters of whose business no longer lie within the boundaries of the borough, but are in London. The produce of the neighbourhood, whether fish, flesh, or fowl, milk, butter, or cheese, goes to London as a kind of clearing-house, through which it passes, sometimes before it finds its way to the local consumers. Consequently, many, even most, of the chief representatives of the local business are immediately identified with London. As might be expected, this development has largely changed the relations that once existed between the great county families and the county town. Even in the most remote districts of England something like an attitude of antagonism, or at least of self-assertion, seems to be betrayed on the part of the town towards its rural neighbours. The chief hotel-keepers and shopkeepers of the former are anxious to conciliate the goodwill and secure the patronage of the latter. The advent of the county people on market days, and on other occasions, is still an event. But it is not *the* event. Town remains deferential towards county, but, in the most inoffensive manner in the world possible, it wishes to give county to understand that the tie of dependence which once bound them together, making town the creature of county, is permanently and considerably relaxed.

There is not, indeed, in most cases any real enmity between the two. In very many country towns there will be found gentlemen engaged in commerce or trade who have pedigrees that extend over centuries, and who are directly or remotely connected with the most illustrious of their county neighbours. But though this is to some extent a sentimental tie of union, it is one whose very affinity sometimes acts as the provocative of rivalry. The townsman thinks of himself as a member indeed of the county family, but as belonging to a branch of it which has gone into a different line of business, and which has created new centres and conditions of interest of its own. Insensibly the most unsophisticated of country towns have become more or less isolated from the purely rural districts that surround them. There is a commercial traffic between the two—farmers and cottagers bring in their produce, and sell it. The great county folk, as has been said, repair thither at stated intervals, though they do little towards patronising the tradesman—a fact which is largely accountable for the growing divergence and divorce between the two districts. And there are blood ties as well as business ties uniting them. But the prevailing sentiment in towns is a desire on the part of the citizens to show that they are members of an independent community, capable of choosing their own municipal authorities and generally managing their own concerns.

The legislation which is now more than forty years old has done much to strengthen and encourage this feeling. The Municipal Corporation Act of 1835

marked a new epoch in the history of English local governments. The measure gave municipal government, as it now is, to upwards of 200 English towns. It was adopted by Manchester first, and there, as well as wherever it was adopted subsequently, it commenced to diffuse an entirely new spirit. It brought home, or it has since served to bring home, the sense of citizenship to all who are living under it. The institutions which have directly been its products have generated an intense spirit of corporate energy and freedom; a new motive has been given for local improvements, and a fresh incentive to private and public beneficence. Legislation supplies a continuous stimulus to local activity. Not a session passes in which Parliament does not confer some new right, or impose some fresh duty and responsibilities on local authorities. Thus, during a period of four years ending in 1878, the following, among many other public Acts, were passed, all involving increased local obligations :—

Public Health, Weights and Measures, Contagious Diseases (Animals), Canal Boats, Local Loans, Artisans' Dwellings Improvement, Adulteration Act Amendment, Explosives, Petroleum, &c., &c.

These measures are in some cases permissive, in others imperative, but their number, and in many instances their magnitude and importance, largely account for that steady growth of local expenditure and local indebtedness which periodically excites the unreasonable surprise of honourable members who have supported

these various proposals as they have been submitted to them, but presumably without any idea of the cost which their execution would entail. There is no appearance that this stream of legislation will cease to flow, and at the present moment municipal government in England is full of infinite possibilities. For its actual effects it depends almost entirely upon the men who are its administrators.

Signs are not wanting that what the Municipal Corporation Act of 1835 was to the men of a past generation, the Education Act of 1870 will, in years to come, be considered by men who are not yet middle-aged. The pride which many a citizen of Sheffield, Birmingham, and Bradford takes in the institutions of his town is increased by the fact that he can recollect the return of the first member of the borough, and the first Mayor of the municipality. It does not seem impossible that the time may be coming when the Education Act will suggest in many places a similar sort of honourably gratifying retrospect. Precisely the same stamp of man who took an active part in the assertion of municipal rights and privileges is now engaged in the development of our educational system. School Boards have been formed in many places where they are the only really representative authority of the district. By their means schools are raised everywhere at the expense of the ratepayers, who are thus being educated in the work of self-government. In the towns where this experience is not new, and where men have long been accustomed to take a broad view of their civic duties,

and have already tasted the advantages of common action and co-operation for important common objects, energetic citizens are doing their best to secure not merely an effective system of primary education, but also of secondary instruction. It is with this view that they have in some cases, with the consent of the Education Department, travelled outside the letter of the Act of 1870, and that they have also at their own expense made tours of Germany, France, and Switzerland, noting down all that was best in the educational systems of these countries, with a hope of applying it to Leeds, Sheffield, and elsewhere. Nor is it necessary to suppose that in these cases the local educational jurisdiction will always be separated from the exercise of more general municipal powers. The tendency is everywhere to increase the authorities of the Town Council, and it is even now a question whether the management of Board Schools, which are concerns of quite as much local interest and importance as markets, fairs, gas-works, and water-works, might not conveniently be entrusted to a committee of the Corporation.

The legislation of 1835 was, within certain limits, of an essentially centralising character. It superseded the power of vestries by a Town Council whose jurisdiction has subsequently increased, till at the present moment the Town Councillors, subject to the authority of the Mayor, have absolute control over the government of a town. They have, indeed, to ask the consent of Parliament when they contemplate any changes which affect the tenure of property. They have to forward

their accounts to the Home Secretary, and these accounts have to be laid before Parliament. But, with the exception of these general limitations, they are the masters of their own actions. It is incumbent upon them to see that the streets are well lit, that all quarters of the town are well drained, that the thoroughfares are kept in decent repair. They control the police, they have the election of the borough coroner, and of the stipendiary magistrate, and in some places their recommendation is accepted by the Lord Chancellor in the appointment of gentlemen to the commission of the peace. They manage the baths and parks of the town, and its free libraries and museums; they superintend the markets and fairs, and levy tolls therein, they maintain the lunatic asylum, the industrial school, and possibly the cemetery; they provide a borough hospital, and establish a fire brigade. They are manufacturers of gas, purveyors of water, farmers at the sewage farm, and chemists in the analyst's laboratory. The whole district under their jurisdiction is frequently inspected for sanitary purposes; nuisances are removed by their orders; new buildings surveyed, and old ones ordered to be repaired or pulled down. Finally, they have their representation on many of the educational and charitable foundations of the town, and possibly control by the votes of their members the administration of the local grammar school and other similar institutions.

The best way in which to gain an idea of the municipal administration of the United Kingdom will be to watch its machinery in active motion, and this we



shall most successfully do by visiting one of the great provincial capitals in which it is at work. We are entering, the reader will suppose, a very handsome block of newly-erected buildings—the municipal offices of a busy, prosperous community. The Town Hall itself is accidentally, not necessarily, a separate edifice. The rooms in this present structure consist of a spacious chamber in which the Town Council holds its periodical meetings, of committee-rooms, of the Mayor's private parlour, furnished in a style calculated to impress visitors with a due sense of the dignity of the representative of the citizens ; of clerks' offices ; of reception-rooms, and a smoking-room ; of a spacious kitchen at the top of the building, placed there that the deliberations of the councillors and the occupation of the officials may not be invaded by the odours of the cuisine. Under this roof are the head-quarters of every department charged with the administration of the town and the well-being of its inhabitants. Here it is that the architects and surveyors, with their respective staffs, are domiciled, here that the Town Clerk—an official who may be compared with the Permanent Secretary in the great offices of state, the Mayor being the temporary head of the system—is seated in his bureau, transacts his business, and gives the council and the committees of the council the benefit of his legal knowledge.

To each of the departments of the public work there is assigned its own special committee of, probably, eight in number. The entire council, whence

these committees are chosen, consists, let us say, of sixty-four members, three being elected triennially by the ratepayers of each of the wards into which the town is divided, making in all forty-eight, and sixteen being aldermen, who are the nominees of the Town Council, and have received that titular dignity in recognition of some signal merit or distinguished service. The different committees of the council are responsible to the general body for the superintendence and execution of the tasks distributed amongst them. Before any work is taken in hand, an estimate of its expenditure is submitted to the council, is ratified or amended, as the case may be, and is not to be exceeded without the council's special consent. In each committee there is a finance sub-committee, which examines its accounts and reports them to the finance committee of the entire council. The expenditure incurred through the instrumentality of these bodies suggests one of the chief points of contact between the Imperial Government at Westminster and the Local Government in the provinces. Successive Parliamentary Acts, of which the latest are the Public Works Act of 1875, and the Artisans' Dwellings Act of the following year, have materially enlarged the independent jurisdiction of the municipalities. The most fervent advocates of the principle of municipal autonomy would allow that such centralisation as still exists in the relations between the provinces and Whitehall is indispensable for the protection of the interests of provincial communities. As to the merits

of that specific measure of new legislation which has transferred the control of the prisons from the local bodies to a commission, different opinions exist, and probably the time has not yet come when it is possible to express a decided verdict. The only thing which now seems certain is that the local inspection which was reserved by the Act to municipal authorities is gradually being suffered by these authorities themselves to become a dead letter.

Such interference as the Central Government exercises in the municipalities is designed with the exclusive purpose of checking precipitate action, or a recklessness of expenditure which might involve generations of ratepayers as yet unborn in heavy financial embarrassments. If the authorities of the large towns only display the same prudence as the shareholders in a company demand from their trustees and managers, they will have no reason to complain that their action is hampered by the Local Government Board, to which they are subject, and acquiescence by this Board in the proposals of the municipality may be expected as a matter of course. Some great local work, let us suppose, is in contemplation or progress, which involves the sale or transfer of land, and probably in addition the borrowing of a considerable sum of money. What is the mode of procedure which the municipality adopts? Formal application with full particulars of the scheme is made to the Local Government Board to sanction the undertaking, to allow the expenditure, and to authorise the loan. In a little while an official

from Whitehall, having previously made it known to all whom it may concern by the medium of advertisements in the local papers that he will attend on a particular day, at a particular place, for hearing the objections which may be advanced by dissentients from the enterprise, arrives in the town. He proceeds to examine the nature of the contemplated work, weighs the arguments which are advanced for, and against, the compulsory sale of particular properties, judges for himself whether the security offered is adequate to the amount required, and duly reports the result of all this to his department in London. In cases where the action of the municipality interferes with the right of private property, it is the approval of Parliament, expressed in legislative enactment, which has to be gained. When, in addition to this, a sum of money is required for the accomplishment of any enterprise, there are two modes of action which may be resorted to. In the first place, there is the simple expedient of the municipality going into the money market, and starting a loan of its own upon the security of its rates and works, which loan it can usually get at about four per cent. In the second place, resort may be had to the Public Works' Loan Commissioners, who are authorised to lend sums of money at not less than three and a half per cent., to be paid off in terms not exceeding fifty years, to municipalities, with a view of facilitating improvements in the sewage, gas, and water arrangements of big towns. It may be remarked that the theory underlying this procedure is, that the

Commissioners borrow on consols, payment of which might of course be indefinitely deferred. As a matter of fact they borrow on exchequer bonds which very speedily fall due. There is an obvious disadvantage incidental to this arrangement in the fact that the sudden payment of these liabilities might in times of great financial stress involve considerable inconvenience. It is, therefore, a question whether the loans made by the Commissioners ought not rather to be on terminable annuities. As for the security which the municipalities in these contracts provide, it is indisputably sufficient. Seeing that the Commissioners never lend more than the amount of the total value of two years' rating, it is clear that nothing but the most scandalous carelessness can ever result in a realised loss. Even supposing that this neglect were at all a likely contingency, there would still be the safeguard of that extreme jealousy of local expenditure entertained by the representatives of the Central Government.

These details, which, troublesome as they may seem, it is quite necessary that we should not ignore, have kept us waiting for some time on the threshold of the really gorgeous chamber in which the members of the Town Council have assembled for the purpose of debate. It is the House of Commons in miniature, with some of the features that remind one of the Chamber of Deputies at Versailles. Councillors and aldermen are collected in little knots, discussing with each other, and with their constituents, the ratepayers, the issues of the coming debate, in the rooms and

lobbies contiguous to the place of actual deliberation. The apartment dedicated to their purpose is an exact amphitheatre. Stout oak chairs, with stout oak tables, in continuous line before them, are ranged tier upon tier, and last of all is a gallery with some half-dozen rows of seats, exactly resembling the dress circle in a theatre. Opposite these, at the other end of the apartment, where in a theatre the stage would be, is a raised dais, in the centre of which sits on the chair of state the Mayor of the municipality, supported on the right hand by the Town Clerk as his official interpreter of vexed points of municipal law or deliberative procedure, and on the left by a couple of aldermen who have been his immediate predecessors in office.

The orders of the day have now been read, and the active business of the day begins. A good deal of it is already cut and dried, prepared by the different committees of the council at their respective sittings, and only waiting the final registration and formal sanction of the entire body in full council assembled. Then the council, like the House of Commons on analogous occasions, resolves itself into a committee, and, unlike the House of Commons, appoints by a unanimous vote as its chairman, its ordinary speaker or president—in other words, the Mayor. A Bill is presented which it is proposed to ask Parliament to pass in the ensuing session. The clauses are gone through one by one with some discussion, and then the council resumes, and the Mayor reports that the committee has passed the Bill without amendment, whereupon a

resolution is adopted, authorising the Town Clerk to take, on behalf of the council, all such proceedings as may be necessary to promote the Bill in Parliament.

Not much excitement can be said to attach to these routine transactions. It is evident, however, from the manner in which the seats in the strangers' gallery are filling, that something in the nature of a sensation is expected. Before long it comes. An important committee brings up a report involving recommendations, the policy of which has apparently been keenly contested outside the council. It soon appears that the principle at stake is complicated by a purely personal controversy. Mr. Councillor or Alderman A. is vaguely conscious of a grievance at the hands of Mr. Councillor or Alderman B. He has nothing very specific to allege in the way of complaint, but he has a distinct idea that the comments of his fellow-townsmen on his words or actions upon a recent occasion were charged with a subtly caustic flavour, and had the effect of making him appear in a rather ludicrous light to the local public.

This is true human nature. The Briton will forgive a direct insult, and forget a well-planted and indisputable blow, but the rapier-thrust of a phrase, which, apparently innocent or unobjectionable, in reality hits him in a vital part, is an outrage that he cannot endure. His wound is made worse because for a long time he hugs the weapon which inflicted it. At last the moment has arrived when he must liberate his soul.

He watches his opportunity, rises to address the assemblage, and is pronounced by the Mayor to be in possession of the house. The honest controversialist is too acutely sensitive of the bitter sting of the viciously turned sentences of his critic, too indignant with the accusations he can detect in them, to be epigrammatic or even relevant in his retorts. Instead, he is very prolix, very prosy, and is perpetually wandering into themes not wholly akin to the subject in hand. Reminded at not infrequent intervals by the Mayor or some other member of the assemblage that he must be more pertinent in his observations, he sits down for a moment, and rises, hot, angry, and nervous, to renew the attack, which he is firmly persuaded is a defence necessary to his honour as a citizen and as a man. Meanwhile, the occupants of the strangers' gallery are beginning to display signs of sympathy or disapproval; this, of course, is as much in violation of the established rules of municipal procedure as the applause of spectators in a court of justice, or the cheers of an appreciative phalanx of the recipients of orders to the Speaker's gallery in the House of Commons. The Mayor interposes a mild but firm rebuke, the intrusive shouts are silenced, and the excited rhetorician continues his discourse.

This is only an incident, and by no means too common a one, in the debates of the Town Council. As a rule the proceedings of this body are conducted in a severely business-like spirit and with a full sense of that responsibility proper to a body which is



entrusted with the expenditure of a sum not much less than one million annually. An ordinary Town Council displays an ability in debate quite equal to that witnessed in the House of Commons when sitting in committee on some question of domestic legislation. Naturally the political influences and advantages of such municipal training as this are considerable. The citizen, who has served his apprenticeship to the active work of the corporation, who has borne a prominent part in the criticism and advocacy of local measures in the council, who has worked actively on the committees to which he has been elected, has received a valuable preliminary training as a member of the imperial legislature. On the other hand, though this very training may enable him to take a broader and more comprehensive view of the wants and institutions of England, though it is quite certain that it will prevent his ignoring, as there is always more or less of a tendency in members of Parliament to ignore, that complex provincial system which lies outside the metropolis, it is beset by certain obvious drawbacks. The man thus educated grows up indeed with actively developed ambitions and with invigorated capacities. But strongly convinced that the provincial corporation is the true unit of imperial government, he may be apt to forget that the same positive certainty and precision are not possible in imperial as in municipal affairs, that when the complexity of the subject matter is infinitely increased, the method of procedure which was once applicable is applicable no

longer, and that the burden of larger principles cannot be supported in the same attitude which was adequate to maintain the affairs of a town. Yet, if he has a native elasticity of mind, he will soon adapt himself to the new conditions. Municipal statesmanship will prove but a transient phase of his political development, and he will gradually become a power in the House of Commons by the exercise of the self-same gifts, accommodated to the changed circumstances that have secured for him pre-eminence in his own municipality.

Meanwhile, what of the functions of the august individual who presides over the deliberations of the council—his Worship the Mayor? The Mayor of a great town is carefully to be distinguished, as to his position and power, from the chief officer of the corporation of small provincial boroughs on the one hand, and of the City of London on the other. Onerous and exacting as are all his labours, the Lord Mayor of London has a host of duties to discharge, which for the sake of distinction may be indicated by the epithet ornamental. While, in conjunction with the City aldermen, he is the chief administrator of justice and law within the City precincts; while almost every national movement for the relief of national distress may be said to emanate from the Mansion House, which is the Lord Mayor's palace; while he is the one officer of the realm whose initiative and sanction are the main-springs of English charity, the decorative attributes of the post are not less conspicuous, and in their way important. Large independent means have become

essential for the support of the state in which the Lord Mayor is expected to live, and for the pageants and hospitalities of which he has to bear the chief burden. Periodically he entertains as his guests distinguished visitors from abroad, now an Asiatic despot and now a European prince. There are few days in the week in which he has not, clad in the insignia of his office, to take his place at some public meeting, or to occupy a prominent position at some public dinner. In these duties he is frequently accompanied by the sheriffs, but they only enhance the magnificence of the effect, and do not relieve the chief magistrate of the City of any of his actual work.

The mayoralty in provincial cities is a position not less coveted and honourable than in the capital city of the empire. In small towns it may have sunk into disrepute, but in towns like Manchester, Liverpool, Bristol, Birmingham, and many others, much inferior to them in importance and influence, it is regarded as the highest mark of distinction which can be offered to a citizen. \* In all these cases, with the notable exception of Liverpool, the ornamental attributes of the office are somewhat in abeyance. At Liverpool, indeed, which, as the great port of communication with the New World, abounds in opportunities of doing honour to illustrious strangers, the Mayor has to participate in entertainments and pageants which involve an expenditure that is only partially recompensed to him by the salary which he is paid. Elsewhere in the provinces the Mayor is generally an unpaid

officer, and when his yearly term is over he can scarcely hope to find himself less than £1,000 or £1,500 out of pocket. It is the chief function of the provincial Mayor to be president of the Town Council; and the feeling of his fellow-townsmen is, that he should not sink his business work in this capacity in the mere pomps and vanities of his office. The routine labours of the post occupy his entire time, and if he happens to be a member of any great business firm, he cannot hope to give more than an hour a day to its affairs, and will probably have to make some arrangements with his partners during his twelve-month of office. He represents the council and the town on deputations to ministers of state, while if the Central Government want information on any local matter, it is to the Mayor that they will apply. He presides over public meetings of all kinds, whether held for political or charitable purposes. At purely town meetings he fills the chair in virtue of his office. He takes his place on the rota of magistrates, and in virtue of his office presides over all their meetings. In addition to this, he is a member *ex officio* of every committee of the council, and is thus held, as, indeed, from the necessities of the case he must be, responsible for the general working of the entire municipal machinery.

Passing to the administration of justice in municipalities, the Mayor, as has been seen, is always *ex officio* the chief magistrate of the corporation. Provincial aldermen, unlike London aldermen, have not, in virtue

of their titular dignity, any magisterial power, while most of the practical duties of the magistracy are often discharged by a stipendiary officer, whom it is optional with every corporation to create. The borough magistrate differs from the county justice, in the fact that he is not required to possess any property qualification, and that he need not even be a burgess of the municipality in which he acts. The sole legal qualification which exists is that he shall reside within seven miles of the borough. On the other hand, various practical disqualifications have gathered round the office from time to time, at the discretion or caprice of different Lord Chancellors, with whom—and not, as in the case of counties, with the Lord Lieutenant—the appointment of borough magistrates rests exclusively. Lord Westbury was the first keeper of the Sovereign's conscience to exclude brewers from the commission, and this disqualification has been subsequently extended to all persons engaged in any branch of the liquor trade. It is also customary to disqualify practising solicitors, and, sometimes, gentlemen connected with the local press. The Mayor continuing to hold magisterial office during the year succeeding to that of his mayoralty, it follows that the borough bench is always occupied by two magistrates elected by the burgesses—a fact which the champions of popular privileges and the principle of popular representation naturally cite as the explanation of the general superiority of urban to rural justice. For this superiority there is a further guarantee in the circumstance that the administrators of urban justice

live in the full light of public opinion, are subject to the criticism of an active and inquisitive press, and belong to a complex body animated by great diversity of interests and convictions.

In one respect at least the borough magistrates are sometimes at a disadvantage. Although a political bias, more or less strong, occasionally possesses the county bench, it is kept discreetly in the background; but in the case of the borough bench the appointments are habitually made from political motives. Hence arises much rough criticism of a purely partisan character, which is not calculated to promote a spirit of respect for the administration or administrators of the law. The Lord Chancellor, unlike the Lord Lieutenant, is not the incumbent of his office for life, and it consequently happens that, as each successive Government acquires place and power, a fresh batch of magistrates is made by the incoming Chancellor, for the purpose of satisfying the claims of ministerial supporters in the different boroughs throughout the kingdom. Town Council debates, and occasionally debates in Parliament itself, show how the vehemence of parties is aroused by these judicial appointments. In some instances—and it must be remembered that in such matters as these, which depend wholly upon an infinitely varying social usage, it is impossible to lay down an absolute and comprehensive rule—the Lord Chancellor allows the Town Councillors little or no option in the matter, and the corporation has only a nominal veto upon applicants, or finds that the list of names which it submits is

disregarded. To such a system certain abuses and disadvantages are inevitably incidental. It does not add to the dignity of the magistrate's office, or to the popular regard for justice, that the commission of the peace in boroughs should be bestowed as the reward of political service, and that new magistrates should be indefinitely multiplied in consequence of political exigencies. Three Town Councils, those of Leicester, Worcester, and Rochester, during the first session of the Parliament elected in 1874, succeeded in obtaining a discussion of the alleged grievances which they had sustained by the appointment of Conservative magistrates. On this occasion the representatives of the Government admitted that the appointments were the results of political necessity. The local feuds and mutual recrimination to which this state of things gives rise are at once unfortunate and humiliating.

These facts will convey some idea of the difficulty of preventing political considerations from extending themselves into other non-political issues, and colouring purely municipal affairs. Hence the question arises, whether it is not better to accept and make the best of the inevitable. Much has lately been said against the introduction of political influences into the candidature for municipal offices. The object, it is urged with absolute truth, in the case of an election of a Town Councillor is that the choice shall fall upon the best man forthcoming, independently of his views as to the government of the State. But it is much easier to protest against the confusion of qualifications

than it is to see precisely how the evil is to be remedied. Englishmen have a way of thrusting their political beliefs and views into almost every matter of daily life and business, and whenever a number of Englishmen are gathered together they divide themselves by an irresistible impulse into opposing political camps. When, therefore, the charge is brought against the leading members of any municipal corporation, that they carry the spirit of political exclusion outside the political sphere, it is open for them to reply that they are but endeavouring to turn to the best account a force which is not of their creation. There is, further, some plausibility in the argument that if the political issue was not introduced into the competition, some other idea, of a less worthy kind, infallibly would be, and that it is better for a municipal election to be decided by political considerations than by considerations of social position. By identifying municipal with political issues, Town Councillors may consider that they secure men more competent for the discharge of municipal affairs, and that the mere fact of a parochial office being the coveted prize of a political competition raises its duties above the level of vestrymanship, and induces a better class of men than would otherwise come forward to descend into the arena.

It is not only in the parliamentary and municipal institutions of England that the representative principle is actively and beneficently asserted. To such depositaries of the principle of local governments as Town Councils, Boards of Guardians, and vestries, must



in the case of some cities, notably of Sheffield, be added another. What Chambers of Commerce do for employers and capital, Trades Councils in some degree do for the employed and for industry. The former bodies are organisations of merchants and capitalists, whose object it is by periodical intercourse and deliberation to ascertain what is wanting to advance the best interests of the trade and commerce of the neighbourhood, to see that these deficiencies receive proper consideration at the hands of the legislature, to communicate special wants to parliamentary representatives, and upon occasions to present memorials, or despatch deputations to the Imperial Government.\* In the Trades Council the principle of organisation may be seen in a like state of activity. This council is really a confederation of working men's delegates, for industrial purposes. The members of each industry choose by universal suffrage a parliament of their own, whence some one individual is selected by vote to a place on the general council of the collective industries, whose business it is to watch over the interests of labour and to bring the wants and grievances of labour before the members of the Imperial Parliament, just as the employers do in the Chambers of Commerce. Consequently, the political representative in the case of every great industrial town stands between employers and employed, each in confederated conclave assembled. As he will,

\* Here again it is impossible to lay down a universally applicable rule. Thus Unionism, which, as is said in the text, is a politically powerful principle in Sheffield, is almost politically non-existent in Birmingham.

if he is wise, be able to exercise a wholesome influence with the employers, so also will he be able to contribute much towards the political and economical education of the employed.

The Trades Council, in addition to its periodical meetings, usually holds an annual dinner, and at this dinner one or other of the parliamentary representatives of the borough may be expected to take his place as the guest of the evening. The dinner is not a luxurious banquet. The apartment in which it is held is neither too roomy nor too well ventilated. The diners number over a hundred, and they are very closely packed away. During the day-time they have been occupied with their different callings, some of them engaged in work which requires merely the mechanical exercise of brute strength, others in the manipulations of the most delicate machinery. Now their working dresses are laid aside, they have donned their suits of black broadcloth, and in point of decent presence, good manners, intelligent looks, they are an exceedingly creditable company. The meal only consists of a couple of courses, joints roast and boiled, tarts and puddings solid and satisfying. It is consumed with the swiftness and appetite that one expects to see in English working men. Good fresh meat is not, indeed, strange to their lips; what is strange is the bulk in which they see it displayed. To those who only know beef and mutton from the small morsels which it falls to their every-day lot to taste there is something of irresistible fascination in the visible presence before them of the entire joints

whence those morsels are taken, and at which the diners may cut and come again.

But their intelligence is not dulled by the solidity of the repast and by the glass or two of beer with which it is washed down. They are looking out for a speech—not on politics, but on matters connected with trade and industry—from one of their borough members, who happens to be among them. What they want is not flattery but truth. They know very well that they are sometimes short-sighted, and that many of the rules of their society call for amendment. They wish to be dealt with fairly, to be told when they go wrong and why they go wrong, and if their mentor does this they will not merely be satisfied but grateful. It is difficult to leave such a company as this without feeling that those members of the House of Commons who represent large business constituencies have a daily increasing responsibility. If our elective legislators fairly face the situation, dealing honestly with the working men electors, neither neglecting their interests nor appealing to their vanity, they will have little reason to complain that they are delegates and not free agents. The game is almost completely in their own hands, and they will be acting most unwisely if they neglect these opportunities of meeting their constituents and teaching them—for membership of the House of Commons is not merely a political but an educational responsibility—lessons of something more than partisan fidelity.

If good citizenship ought to be the ideal of the

individual, and if the standard of good citizenship is the completeness with which the duties of a citizen are discharged, it is to the provincial capitals, such as those we have just visited, that we should go. In London itself the active qualities of citizenship are, for the most part, imperfectly displayed. The Londoner pays his rents and taxes, and says with perfect truth that these are heavy enough to secure him every creature comfort outside and inside his home—good drainage, well-paved and well-cleaned streets, pure water, unpolluted air, and gas of good illuminating power. If such boons are not always forthcoming, the Londoner vents his dissatisfaction on those whom he considers the responsible officials, grumbles at his club or his home, or writes a letter to the newspapers, but seldom attempts personally to take in hand the redress of his grievances. London, indeed, is so hugely overgrown, that its size eclipses the sense of private and personal responsibility. The Londoner is a ratepayer, a taxpayer, a subscriber to charities, a voter at political, and sometimes at municipal elections, but scarcely a citizen. There is no sense whatever leavening the mass of the nation of London, of a corporate life in which each one is bound to take his share, and of whose responsibilities none can divest himself. This is one of the reasons that London is probably the worst governed of English cities, and that publicans and small tradesmen are the majority in those vestries which are the local parliaments of London. The provincial Englishman, on the other hand, lives in a more stimulating

atmosphere; he is not oppressed by the same consciousness of infinity of space and number. He is a unit, not a cipher. Invigorated by the knowledge that action is not necessarily followed by failure, he nerves himself to action, and action begets ambition.

London, again, is the most wealthy and one of the least commodious capitals in the world, for the simple reason that only a very limited portion of that aggregate of towns of which London is composed—namely, the City—enjoys municipal rights. A municipality for London is what generations of metropolitan reformers have been endeavouring to secure. The vision that they have before them is that of an *Hotel de Ville*, a group of buildings which should consist of the central offices of all the departments of metropolitan government—Justice, Police, Drainage, Gas, Water, Fire Brigade. This would be the harmonious blending into one organic whole of the fourfold empire from which London as it is suffers—the City Corporation, the Westminster authorities, the Vestries, and the Metropolitan Board of Works. The area of London is divided into 39 districts for vestry action as well as for poor-law administration, and is partitioned anew, with no regard for uniformity, for police, county courts, duties under the Registrar-General, for militia, revenue, postal, gas, water, and parliamentary purposes. Divided and multiplied authority means increased and unnecessary expense, and the pecuniary loss to London in consequence of ill-regulated administrative expenditure may be estimated at a quarter of a million annually, while

that upon gas and water amounts to half a million annually.

Nothing more costly, indeed, than the present system of London local government under vestries can be imagined. Westminster, for instance, has five Boards equal in the aggregate to only one in Marylebone, with five administrative staffs; and the multiplication of vestries involves, of course, in such a case a multiplication of official salaries. In the same way, vestry halls are multiplied for small areas. The action of medical officers is controlled by vestrymen, who are the owners of house property, and it is painfully significant that the total which the vestries have considered adequate to expend in sanitary work for fifteen years is 1s. 6d. per head of the whole population. Gas companies, water companies, and parish authorities, act in the matter of repairs independently of each other—a fact which is some explanation of the phenomenon that two hundred trenches are annually opened in Regent Street. In that limited area which is coincident with the jurisdiction of the Metropolitan Board of Works these inconveniences are minimised. But even the Board of Works has no municipal status: in other words, whereas Manchester, Liverpool, and every English town, under the Municipal Act of 1835, which was withheld from London, can procure from a standing parliamentary committee the permission for improvement—the application for such permission being treated as unopposed private business—no kind of substantial reform can be effected in the capital without the risk of a long

parliamentary debate. On the whole, London has reason to be thankful to the Metropolitan Board of Works. It has improved drainage, made new roads, cheapened and improved the gas supply. Thus, between the years 1861 and 1873, it effected for the consumers of the gas supplied by the companies which it had amalgamated, a saving of £625,446, and the present saving is estimated at £900,000.

What are the difficulties in the way of the establishment of a municipality which shall cover all London? First, the jealousy of the vested interests, not so much of vestrydom as of the Court of Common Council, which latter body would have to be reduced to forty-five. Secondly, the supply in adequate numbers of men qualified to take their seats in the great local parliament of London. This is a difficulty which was anticipated in the case of the London School Board, and the anticipation of which experience has proved to be superfluous. A seat at the new Municipal Council could scarcely be the object of less ambition than a seat at the London School Board. Thirdly, it has been suggested that a body as powerful as that now contemplated—which had at its disposal and subject to its authority the police—might overawe the Imperial Parliament itself. The answer to this is, first, that the man who will control London in the event of a great crisis arising is not the man who governs the police, but he who holds the guns at Woolwich; secondly, that experience does not show life and property to be more insecure in those countries

where the police is in the hands of the local authorities than where it is in the hands of the Government, but the reverse. The third difficulty is the more general and perhaps the fatal one of reconciling so many interests, and justly re-distributing so many financial burdens over so immense an area.

But if the dream of a single municipality for the whole of London is rendered impossible of fulfilment by the vastness of the capital, and if that sense of citizenship and individual responsibility, which it is one of the chief objects of municipal government to generate, must almost be despaired of in the case of a population of upwards of four millions, it by no means follows that the only alternative is the continuance of the present régime. If the capital cannot have one municipality co-extensive with its farthest limits, that is no reason why it should not possess an aggregate of municipalities, each of them coterminous with one or other of the parliamentary boroughs which are its political subdivisions. The dimensions of these might be manageable, and it is exceedingly doubtful whether anything in excess of them would be. The borough of Westminster has a population almost equal to that of one of the largest provincial towns in the kingdom. It is, moreover, conceivable, and even probable, that this plan of grouping municipalities would secure whatever advantages could be gained for the spirit of local *esprit de corps* and competition. The ratepayer and Town Councillor of Marylebone might feel an intelligible interest and pride in knowing that he was better



governed than his neighbour of Chelsea or Finsbury. Yet before even this lesser reform can be accomplished, there are interests so numerous, substantial, and conflicting to be reconciled that the enterprise can scarcely be considered one of the immediate future.

With corporate enterprise and private energy combined, London is undergoing a triumphant process of rehabilitation. In the Albert and Victoria Embankments it has the finest riparian boulevard in the world. When the mansions which will stand upon what once were the grounds of Northumberland House are finished a superb avenue to the Thames will be opened. The new thoroughfare leading from Sloane Street to Walton Street is rendered imposing by Queen Anne mansions not more spacious than picturesque. A complete transformation has been wrought in the district which was once called West Brompton, but which is now known as South Kensington, by the mile after mile, the acre after acre of miniature palaces, whose lowest rental is more than equal to a middle-class income. On every side, in almost every quarter of the great city, something like this is going on. Imagine the feelings of Addison, could his shade revisit the earth, gazing down upon what once were the fields and woods of his "Old Kensington," and seeing instead of sheep-cropped meadows and leafy trees an infinite expanse of houses, each of them rivalling in splendour and dimensions the biggest and finest that he knew.

Nor are the triumphs won by the spirit of modern

improvement in London material only. We have made great advances of late years in the matter of taste. There is visible in summer a large expanse of well-diversified and well-distributed colour in the admirably-kept flower-beds that fringe the road between Hyde Park and the Marble Arch. Nor is it only the parks and the Thames Embankment which have received a new grace by the care bestowed upon them. Collections of gay geraniums and scented mignonette; hanging gardens, as fair as any which can have added their charm to the old Babylon, are the common ornaments of the houses of the new, and the horticulture of windows is as much of a fine art as the horticulture of the enclosures in the London squares. Kensington Gardens, indeed, demand more attention than they receive, and a walk through what is really as noble an urban pleasaunce as any in the world is too often, to all who love trees and know how they should be tended, a succession of melancholy experiences. Before London can vie in natural beauties with such capitals as Paris or Brussels, it is necessary not only that she should be better supplied with trees, but that those trees which she already has should be better cared for.

## CHAPTER VI.

### TOWNS OF BUSINESS.

General Characteristics of Commercial and Manufacturing Districts of England  
—Humanising and Educating Influences at work in the Great Towns of  
the North—Employed and Employer in Lancashire and Yorkshire—Man-  
chester and Liverpool generally compared—Aspect of Life in the Cotton  
Manufacturing Districts—Newcastle-on-Tyne—Birmingham.

EVERY city, it has been remarked, symbolises in concrete form some great idea; and the large commercial cities of the England of to-day are the embodiments of human science applied to facilitate the processes and augment the results of human industry. The external aspect of these vast hives of toil is seldom picturesque. There is little or nothing pleasing to the eye in the approaches to them, yet there is much that is profoundly impressive in the appearance of their outskirts as the traveller enters them by night. Looking forth from the windows of the railway train, after having crossed miles of barren moor and deserted fields, the passenger becomes suddenly aware of the flaming beacon-lights of a never-ending labour. In the distance he descries pillars of flame, lost in huge spiral exhalations of murky smoke. At first the glowing sentinels which guard the portals of his destination are few; soon they multiply, till at last his entire track seems to be a line of fire. Above him are the same peaceful moon and silent stars which he saw when he was being hurried

through the desolate levels of Yorkshire, with nothing save the mighty rushing throb of the steam-engine, as it whirled him along, to violate the serenity of the night. But everything else is changed, and as he is shot across the giant bridge spanning a great river he can not only descry an endless vista of watch-fires of industry, but can hear the tremendous reverberation of forges mightier than those of the Cyclops.

Yet though man, by his all-powerful enterprise, is perpetually transforming the face of Nature, though it is this interminable series of swift transformations which strikes the traveller through England so powerfully, the continuity of national life and feeling is preserved unbroken. This is mainly due to the very suddenness of the change from manufacturing England to agricultural England. The denizens of the two districts may have little in common, whether in the way of personal characteristics or mutual acquaintance. Yet as an hour and a half will take the traveller from the heart of the Black Country to a typical agricultural neighbourhood, so, in the higher social influences dominating town and country is there a near relationship. The fact that the great country landlord is also, in many cases, the great proprietor of mines and factories, is at once a guarantee and a symbol of the fusion between the different elements of English life and the diverse sources of our national power. The new is ever being incorporated with the old, and the result of the process is a growing identity of interests and of feeling.

If the visitor to the large manufacturing towns of the kingdom is struck by the gloom of their atmosphere, and by the squalor of some of their quarters ; if he sees, or thinks that he sees, around him a race of men, half of whom are preoccupied with the anxieties of opulence, while the other half are consumed with the cares of poverty ; if he finds upon the surface nothing but the worship of Mammon and the desolating influence of want, he has but to examine a little more closely into the system, and he will find that there is no lack of humanising influences at work. It is a population which may seem to live for money and material success, but it is also stirred by higher thoughts, and its dreams of the prosperity which is reckoned by the ledger are abundantly tempered by tastes and pursuits of a more softening and elevating kind. The teaching of art and letters is not wanting to the members of these communities. Science has attractions independently of the power over Nature with which she invests man. The workers may appear as wholly absorbed in the pecuniary successes of their tasks as the artificers of Dido with the walls of rising Carthage. But there are the instruments of culture as well as the greed of gain ; and if Manchester is to England all and more than Carthage was to Africa, the graces and ornaments of Athens are not quite forgotten.

A century ago the whole of Lancashire was in a condition little better than barbarism. Life was unsafe ; property was insecure ; strangers were attacked simply because they were strangers. Sixty years since the

favourite sports of the inhabitants of Blackburn and Oldham were bull-baiting and compelling old women to race in sacks. The improvement which has taken place in the interval has been confined to no single class of the population; and if native refinement of mind has not in all cases proved a grace within the reach of art, there is at least a very considerable amount not only of material but of intellectual civilisation. Such towns as Manchester and Liverpool may be fairly described as being at once capitals of English commerce and centres of English culture. There may be in them something of that tendency to glorify the acquisition of wealth which is so common in America, but this wealth is not exclusively sought for mere wealth's sake. Many thriving representatives of Lancashire trade and manufacture regard the vast pecuniary reward of their energy and enterprise as a means, not as an end. It builds the edifice, but it is not considered to crown it. The aim is not even mainly selfish, and the Lancashire merchant hopes above all things to transmit the fortune he has made to a son, who will add to it the graces of an education and a training which he himself has not. Music, painting, the drama, collections of art-treasures, science, are regarded, not merely as the superfluous embellishments, but as the indispensable accompaniments of prosperous existence. The Handel Festivals, and the other great choral jubilees, are never so successful as when they are held in the great cities of the north. Opera-singers and actors meet there with the most sympathetic and the most critically

appreciative audiences. Without the patronage of these cities the studios of London would languish. China, bric-a-brac, and the whole world of antiquarian curiosities, find in them their most ready and generous purchasers. The books which are read in the metropolis are read, not so much simultaneously as previously, in the large towns of the north. Lectures on science, history, and literature meet with hearers as numerous and as attentive, if not as distinguished, as at the Royal Institution in London.

It would be a mistake to suppose that the only type of prosperous manufacturers is that of the showy and luxurious plutocrat, with his picture galleries, his well-stocked cellars, his graperies, his conservatories and their precious contents of delicate exotic plants. There is an old proverb in Lancashire—"Four generations from clog to clog"—which means that the cycle of gradual rise and fall, the process of crowning the edifice of success and bringing it down to the dust, are comprised within the lives of father, son, grandson, and great-grandson. The adage probably had a good deal of truth in it when the wealth and prosperity which followed the introduction of free trade had the dangerous attractions of novelty. It is only verified to-day in those instances in which the successful Lancashire manufacturer pays little attention to the education of his son, who in his turn will beget a more ruinously reckless offspring. But spendthrifts and profligates, whether in spite of parental solicitude or in consequence of parental neglect, are not exclusively confined to

any one portion of the population, and the proportion of young men who squander the patrimony which they have inherited is not larger among the manufacturers of England than amongst any other class. It will be found that the fortunes of which the foundations have once been laid in manufacturing families are often of an enduring character, and undoubtedly the tendency is, not for the circular progress from "clog to clog," but rather to the translation of a newly created family to a higher social sphere.

It may be that for the simple thrifty manufacturer, who is as much a representative man as the merchant living in princely state, we should go rather to Yorkshire than to Lancashire. In some kinds of manufacture, minute care, judgment, and frugality do the work which is done in others by enterprise, courage, and capital. Naturally enough, these two distinct kinds of undertaking tend to develop two corresponding kinds of character. We have glanced at the great cotton lord and millowner living amid all the pomp of wealth, and sparing none of the lavish expenditure which that pomp entails. Take the case, which is equally real, of a gentleman, who in a much smaller way of business—a proprietor, it may be, of a gold and silver smelting factory—realises, by dint of incessant care and unflagging personal attention, something like £3,000 a year. He inhabits no gilded mansion with marble staircase and corridors, decorated with costly canvases; his drawing-room is not furnished with the choicest articles of vertu, and as you leave it to pass into the garden,



you do not find yourself in a fragrant grove of oranges, blossoming under a crystal roof, nor are your ears lulled by the murmurous plash of fountains. The establishment is not wanting in refinements, but they are the refinements of a somewhat austere simplicity. The house is furnished more in the style of the thrifty tradesman of fifty years ago, or the clergyman of straitened means in our own day. Yet neither education, nor culture, nor moral grace is wanting to the household. Though the private expenditure of the head of the family is probably less than a thousand a year, no trouble or money is spared to secure for his children the highest and most complete instruction which they can have. The girls are under the care of the best of governesses as well as of the best of mothers; and when the boys are old enough, they will be sent to a judiciously selected public school. In such a household as this there is no lavish dispensation of hospitalities, there is little visiting of any sort, there is much severity of atmosphere, and there is, perhaps, not enough of sweetness and light. It is probable that the family is brought up on the principles of a rigid teetotalism, and that wine, beer, and spirits are never seen upon the table. It is not less likely that the whole household is dominated by a distinctly religious spirit, and it will be probably found that the religion is one of the creeds of Nonconformity.

Doubtless, whether in Yorkshire or in Lancashire, the prevailing tendency is in the direction of an increasingly luxurious style of life. As Manchester and

Liverpool have their suburban palaces, so are the environs of Bradford studded with the costly homes of Bradford manufacturers, while at Sheffield, a couple of miles from the heart of its busiest industry, the Eccleshall and Radmore districts abound in really superb houses, solid stone structures, placed in the midst of park-like grounds, splendidly furnished, highly decorated, often enriched with modern masterpieces of painting and sculpture.

Again, though the traditions of primitive simplicity linger with a more visible influence in Yorkshire than in Lancashire, there are tastes and habits peculiar to the county and common to the Yorkshire merchant and a territorial aristocracy. Every Yorkshireman loves a horse. Most Yorkshiremen have no objection to a bet. Both of these idiosyncrasies of the Yorkshire character are illustrated to a very conspicuous degree in two of the towns of the county—Sheffield and Doncaster. At Doncaster the race for the St. Leger is more of a genuinely popular institution than the race for the Derby on Epsom Downs. It attracts Yorkshiremen from far and near, and especially from the neighbouring great towns, where there is always an unlimited indulgence in wagering.

But cricket and football are the pastimes of which Sheffield may be considered the metropolis, as much as it is of cutlery and of iron and steel manufacturers. It is also the capital of pedestrianism; running matches and walking matches are perhaps more plentiful here than in any other town in England, and these matches

provoke much gambling. All the approaches to the ground which is the scene of the contest—and miserably squalid and dirty many of these approaches are—are densely crowded. Hundreds of men throw up work for the day in order that they may get a glimpse of the contest, and make their books, or get the opportunity of backing their fancy. The interest taken by the women is scarcely less keen—though the mothers and wives of Sheffield workmen can have but little reason to feel pleasure in the sport, for wages are recklessly squandered in betting and drinking on these occasions, and the natural consequences are hunger and want at home for a long time afterwards. The more respectable working men of the place tell you, with evident bitterness, that betting is one of the curses of their order. In other respects, Sheffield, like other central towns in the districts of the mineral industry, shows but little of that thriftiness which is to be seen in the cotton districts of Lancashire. The explanation probably is that the fluctuations of prosperity and adversity are within much narrower limits in the textile than in the metal industries. Lancashire earnings are not so large and are much more regular than in mining neighbourhoods; consequently the expenditure of the working classes is much more carefully made by textile artisans and their families than by miners, and, as might be expected, the co-operative movement has never attained in Yorkshire anything like the same successful development which has fallen to its lot in Lancashire. While the balance of social and

economical advantages is thus rather on the side of the textile workers, they do not fare equally well from a physical and sanitary point of view. The great steel and iron works of Sheffield and Middlesborough, with the tremendous demands that they make upon the muscles of the workers in them, have been instrumental in giving us a far finer race of men than the textile factories ; and as are the men, so are the women.

There are marked points both of difference and similarity in the social life of London and the social life of Manchester and Liverpool. Like London, they have their suburbs and their clubs, their hansom cabs, omnibuses, and tramways, their theatres and music-halls, their mainly fashionable and their purely business quarters. But there is infinitely less concentration of trade, industry, and their representatives, within certain districts, in the case of the capitals of the provinces than in the case of the capital of the empire. The sense of labour and of poverty pervades these great towns to a much more conspicuous extent than it pervades London. In London one may spend the day in walking through streets, squares, and entire neighbourhoods, without encountering any, or many, visible signs that the wealthiest and most luxurious capital of the world is also the scene of the most numerous and in the aggregate the busiest human industries ever collected together. In Leeds and Manchester, the presence of a nation of toilers is much more generally perceptible, and the contrast between squalor and splendour is sharper, more sudden, more ubiquitous. It is

possible in London, by a judicious ordering of one's movements, to keep almost all that is suggestive of misery and destitution out of sight. This cannot be done in cities where the haunts of luxury and toil interpenetrate each other. The shadows of the great factories and of those who work in them are cast over the whole place, and at certain hours of the day there is no street which is not more or less surrendered to the patrol of factory operatives.

It follows from this that in towns like Manchester and Liverpool the working classes are a much more visible power than in London. In other words, there is in these cities more of the impressive assertion of a complex corporate life than in the capital. London may have its working men's mass meetings in Hyde Park, and its sectarian demonstrations in Trafalgar Square. Hundreds and even thousands of London artisans and operatives assemble on occasions in the East End, and make more or less of a triumphal progress to the West. But none of these celebrations produce anything like the effect of a gathering of Lancashire or Yorkshire working men in a Free Trade Hall or Corn Exchange. The reason of course is that in London the vastness of the adjoining area dwarfs the significance of the spot in which the particular gathering is held, and the consciousness of the almost infinite hosts around and about who do not participate in it, prevents the imagination from answering readily or vividly to the popular appeal.

The composition, character, and customs of the

working classes in their two representative capitals are entirely different. In each of these respects very distinctive peculiarities exist at Manchester, while Liverpool possesses most of the features common to large towns. What the mill-hands are to Manchester the dockyard population and the sailors of all nationalities are to Liverpool. Both cities have necessarily many occupations in common—the flour-mills, rice-mills, oil-mills, refineries, and foundries, in which they abound, as well as the trades of the ordinary artisan classes, bricklayers, carpenters, and joiners. But in Manchester these classes seldom come prominently before the eye, being to a great extent merged in the overwhelming number of factory employés. Few things are more remarkable in Manchester than the vast crowds of mill-hands which dominate the streets and monopolise the pavements when the hours of work are over or suspended. The manner of these busy toilers is marked by little of superficial polish. There is nothing in their address which recognises the existence of social gradations. To touch the hat is a thing unknown, whilst “Sir” is rarely used even to their employers. But, bluntness and roughness notwithstanding, these mill-hands are a well-read, a thrifty, and an intelligent race, good citizens, and kindly fellows. Their dialect is uncouth, but they take pride in it, and are encouraged to do so by their masters. High wages, and the adaptability of the work to women, girls, and boys, give them comparatively ample means, while improvidence and extravagance are either exceptional, or else come

only in infrequent outbursts. When these occur, the manifestations are often curious, sometimes taking the form of a lavish indulgence on the part of men in the luxuries of school-boys.\*

The mill-hand is not infrequently of diminutive stature, this physical defect being the result, in some degree, of indoor and comparatively sedentary employment, but more often of early marriages. A young man of eighteen can earn 25s. a week, a girl of sixteen 14s. On the basis of this income the two take each other for better or worse, and continue to work at the mill until the woman is detained at home by maternal cares. The pair will now find it difficult to make both ends meet, until their children begin to earn wages; and when these in their turn have arrived at adult age, they will marry off-hand as their parents did before them. The factory housewife is saving, cleanly, loquacious, and very often extremely shrewd. As a rule, there is among the women very little that can be said to be positive immorality.

Theatres, music-halls, and excursions around Manchester provide ordinary amusements, while literary institutes and entertainments are very popular with the mill-hands, who are often great readers, and frequently keen politicians. Some of the pastimes are sufficiently primitive. At the fêtes held in the Pomona Gardens, in Manchester, on the Saturday half-holiday, men

\* I have myself seen in Manchester two factory hands (men) enter a confectioner's shop, buy a piece of wedding-cake, price 4s., to eat with their mug of beer.

may be seen dancing together, turning slowly round and round; whilst others, mostly youths of eighteen, will stand face to face in couples, and do a limited clog movement to a monotonous tune, their companions standing round to watch and take their turn. It is, in fact, the negro tom-tom dance without the savage exuberance. But it is a necessity that, though the average intelligence is high, there must be, amongst the stunted produce of early marriage, a certain amount of congenital imbecility. At Whitsuntide the mill-hands go in crowds to Liverpool, but mix little with the inhabitants. The chief object is to cross the river, and have a dip in the sea. The ordinary dress on these holiday occasions is a drab moleskin, while men and women alike are much given to bright silk neckties, scarfs, and shawls.

But although in Manchester itself the masses of the mill-hands outnumber the representatives of all other trades, yet the latter are not so completely lost to sight as in the adjoining districts. The warehouses in Manchester employ large numbers of "packers," whose business is the baling and casing of goods, as well as porters and carters. In the outlying manufacturing places, on the other hand, at such towns as Hyde, Staleybridge, Blackburn, Bolton, and Oldham, and in the scattered villages, the factory hand of the purest type will be found, whether employed at a mill, a factory, a print-works, or a bleach-works. Here there is not, as in the chief centre, any degree of mixture, any blending with other social or industrial callings.



Coal-fields, indeed, are sprinkled throughout the neighbourhood, but colliers, wherever they may be, hold little general intercourse with the surrounding population. If there be any perceptible difference between the habits and ways of those residing in the smaller towns and of those settled in the country villages, it is that there may be observed in these districts all the independence characteristic of the Manchester mill-hand in an undiluted form. The result of town life—at Blackburn, for instance—is to weaken the bonds of the friendly association existing between master and man in rural districts. Though the operative may live in one of his employer's cottages, and call him "John," there will be no personal cordiality. On the other hand, in the village of Compstall, in Cheshire, for example, the whole place belongs to one great concern, every inhabitant being directly or indirectly in its employ. A church and clergyman, schools and lecture-hall, are provided by the firm, who in various ways personally interest themselves in the amusements of their people.

The daily life of the factory operative is nowhere so characteristically seen as in these villages and towns. At six o'clock on a March morning, just as the sun, yet struggling through a bank of clouds, catches the high roofs and taller chimney, the loud clanging of a bell summons the factory hands to work. The numberless windows, facing eastward, of the group of gaunt buildings known as "the mill," reflect back the bright rays as with the vivid glow of mirrors. Beneath

them, close under the wall, runs the canal, across which, through the row of poplars fringing the towing-path on the farther side, are seen undulating meadows and leafless woods stretching to the hills beyond. Similar buildings, the windows looking out on the streets of the busy little town itself, face north and west; whilst to the south the square is completed by a high wall, above which peep the roofs of engine-house and offices. Between these latter the wide entrance-gates stand open, disclosing beyond the lodges the paved and gravelled quadrangle within. Outside, and at a considerable distance, seemingly unconnected with the buildings it serves, the great chimney rises from a grassy mound to the height of 160 feet.

This, briefly, is the appearance presented by the exterior of one of the great factories or cotton-mills situated in Lancashire, in which are carried on both spinning and weaving—the two distinct processes that convert the raw fibre into calico. Rows of neat cottages with grimy walls, but scrupulously clean door-steps, sills, and interiors, line the paved streets without. Here and there the gayer window of a dwelling turned into a shop adds variety; and, in such small towns as we are now describing, on one side will rise, storey upon storey, a huge factory.

As the bell resounds, these streets are peopled with a moving throng pressing in the direction of the entrance-gates. Men and boys, girls and a few women, the former making the pavement ring with the patter

of their clogs, the latter protected against the raw air by a shawl drawn over head and neck, form a crowd too eager to reach the work of the day for idle talk. Nevertheless, there is not wanting an occasional greeting to the housewife, who, through the open cottage door with its footboard, is seen busy in the duties that have taken her away from the occupation of girlhood and early married days. The bright fire, the clean children, the chest of drawers with its painted tray and array of books, the special pride of the good man who has just risen to join the human stream without, reveal something of the comfort of the mill-hand's home.

But the entrance is reached, and pressing past the lodge, not without a friendly word to overlooker, foreman, or the watchful timekeeper, the crowd disperses across the gravelled square. Whilst some go to the warehouse, the greater portion enter the tall buildings where the spinning is carried on, and others, these chiefly women, cross to the three-storeyed building ending in the low weaving-sheds with their pointed semi-glass roofs.

Within, the preliminaries are quickly completed. The operatives have got rid of their superfluous clothing. In the various rooms for scutching, lapping, carding, and roving the raw fibre which lies in a snowy heap in the first of them, the spinner or minder has seen that his mules and frames are in working order, and stands in the narrow path which divides and gives access to the different machines. In like

manner, in the shed the weaver is at her post beside the power-looms that are her care. In both places, the space above is full of driving-wheels and enormous leathern bands to transmit the motive power. In the engine-house, through whose long windows beam, crank, and fly-wheel of the machinery within are visible, all is ready; and as the finger of the clock touches the hour, the first laboured beat of the engine proclaims that the work of the day has commenced. Inside the factory, the giant strength that has lain quiescent is, all at once, in motion. In mid-air the great leathern bands commence their endless course. Below, mules and frames move quickly backwards and forwards along the ground, cylinders revolve at various speeds, the countless spindles and bobbins turn round and round; whilst in the other department the looms work up and down as the quick shuttle flies from side to side. In the one place the minder narrowly watches the machines for which he is specially responsible, and in the other, the weaver is equally as careful to control the action when any hitch shall threaten a flaw in the work; whilst their subordinates attend to their individual tasks.

And so, with a short interval for breakfast, the absorbing process continues until the dinner-hour, when the mill is deserted and the streets are again enlivened by a throng now inclined to linger and chatter, and, in their broad dialect, crack their rough jokes. Home has been reached, dinner eaten, the comforting pipe enjoyed by the men as they saunter back, and once

more work begins, to cease at six o'clock. Then, as the clock chimes, the busy hive pours out its workers—weary it may well be, but yet content as they plod homewards to the welcome that awaits them as the fairly-earned reward of a long day of watchful toil.

Of Liverpool the marked feature in the industrial population is, as has already been said, the nautical class. Quite distinct from the longshore men are the sailors—many of them foreigners—engaged in the real mercantile marine for long voyages. This is scarcely a class of persons calculated to add respectability to a neighbourhood; and though a Sailors' Home has been provided for them, and other attempts to reform them have been made, low public-houses, disreputable lodging-houses, and other noisome dens still flourish. Another prominent community in Liverpool are the Irish, who inhabit a neighbourhood of their own, of which the centre is the locally notorious Sawney Pope Street, a spot enlivened by perpetual disturbances. The Irish in Liverpool, for a time, increased at a very rapid rate. As each new batch of immigrants found employment, they were followed by friends and relations from their native land. But as Ireland has grown more prosperous, and an Irish middle class has begun to develop itself, this movement has been arrested, and it has ceased to be probable that the Irish may constitute a preponderating element in the Liverpool population. Another point to be noticed among the Liverpool working classes is the prevalence

of the representatives of unskilled labour. Since the city on the Mersey is the *depôt* and point of departure of imports and exports, it follows that the unloading and loading of ships and storing of warehouses is the principal labour, employing lumpers, cotton-porters, and carters. No technical skill is required in this industry, a fact which, combined with the direct steam communication with Ireland, is mainly responsible for the many immigrants from the other side of St. George's Channel. Liverpool, as statistics and reports show, has by no means a good character for morality and decorum. But in judging of this evidence, it is always necessary to remember that the repressive measures enforced by the Liverpool magistrates are exceptionally severe, and that the police often apprehend upon charges which would be deemed trivial elsewhere. The shipwrights of Liverpool, who form a distinct class, are an industrious, intelligent body of men. One or two regiments of volunteer artillery, which in efficiency have few equals elsewhere, are exclusively recruited from their number. With these exceptions, the working classes of Liverpool have no characteristics that separate them from the working classes of other large towns. Theatres and music-halls, both thronged nightly with enthusiastic but more or less critical audiences, provide the staple of their amusements. The town has been beautified by the extension of a belt of fine parks, well wooded and admirably kept. Here in summer the inhabitants find their recreations, whilst there are other

opportunities of enjoyment in the excursions easily made by the cheap ferries to the Cheshire side of the river, where at Eastham rural, and at New Brighton seaside pleasures are offered.

As Manchester and Liverpool, whether in respect of their working classes, or their superiors in the social scale, differ from London, so they each of them differ from the other. Thus, although there are in Manchester few families whose connection with the town in any notable way could be traced back to the beginning of the century, yet that city has more hereditary worthies still associated with it than Liverpool; in which latter place, in the course of a generation, not only are there new faces, but changed names. There is an obvious reason for this difference. Success in manufacture—the kind of success that is achieved in Manchester—implies extensive property in building, land, and plant, a property not only productive but readily transmissible from father to son. In the operations of mercantile business, of which Liverpool is the seat, there is less permanence and more vicissitude. The builders of a fortune bid farewell to the place in which they have built it, or, dying, have no freehold to bequeath, but simply money and credit. A disastrous fluctuation sets in, trade is bad, and the money vanishes. This distinction between mere buying and selling and manufacture is inevitable, and will always continue. Again, Liverpool, one of the most cosmopolitan capitals in the world, may be called the Marseilles of England. In a Liverpool morning

paper a name such as Manuel Garcia or Christino Nicopoulos, sure evidence of the nationality of its owner, will almost certainly be found figuring in the lists of police-court celebrities of the previous day. Ascending in the social scale, there will be seen in Liverpool something like a reflection of the mixture of races which is visible in the migratory nautical population. From Scotland and Ireland, from the United States, from all parts of the continents of Europe and Asia, there is a perpetual stream of new blood circulating through the community. The aliens and foreigners soon become permanent settlers, and the old Liverpool families are merged in the hybrid mass. This infusion of new blood occurs to a very much smaller extent in Manchester. Germans and Levantine Greeks are the most conspicuous among the strangers who make that city their home. But these seldom become assimilated to the native population. The latter in particular form a distinct class, perpetuating the peculiar habits of their native land in the country of their adoption.

A healthy, quickening, and instructive element in Liverpool society is to be found in the number of gentlemen who having been abroad in India, North and South America, China, the colonies, and elsewhere during part of their lives, come to end their days on the banks of the Mersey. Often, as part of his commercial training, a Liverpool youth will pass some years in a foreign land, necessarily having his wits sharpened in the process. The very different character of the



Manchester trade affords only a few accidental experiences like these. On the other hand, there are more men, young and old, at Manchester who have received a public school and university education than at Liverpool. The very best society in Manchester or Liverpool is not more accessible to residents than in London, and is very seldom entered by families who have made fortunes by shopkeeping, never by those whose fathers have been shopkeepers in the town itself. The social antecedents of strangers are less critically examined. Military or naval officers, clergymen, and barristers, are general favourites, and in Liverpool there has been of late years a perceptible importation of scions of noble houses who have taken to trade.

There has existed in Liverpool for more than half a century a select and fashionable institution framed after the model of the old Almack's of London, known as the Wellington Rooms. Election to it is by ballot; the claims and positions of candidates are closely scrutinised. To be a member of the society is to obtain a sort of hall-mark of social consideration. Dances are given once a fortnight during the winter, and the building is used for no other purpose. Parties from the different noblemen's seats in the neighbourhood attend frequently, and always in the race week. In Manchester an attempt of the same kind has been made in a series of balls given at the Free Trade Hall, but the experiment has not proved equally successful. There are other social attractions possessed by Liverpool which in Manchester are

wanting. The Manchester races are entirely given up to the mill-hands; but at Liverpool the Grand National, the Autumn Cup, and the Altcar Racing Meeting collect brilliant assemblages of fashionable sportsmen and the fair sex. Liverpool attractions are further increased by its several yacht clubs; the River Mersey thus helping to give the town a social and fashionable distinction of its own which Manchester lacks.

Liverpool and Manchester toilets are equally costly matters. The gentlemen of both places, ambitious of the reputation of dandies, patronise London tailors; but ladies' dresses are abundantly provided by local modistes, and it is only occasionally that costumes are procured from London or Paris. In consequence of commercial vicissitudes and a floating population, Liverpool has never had the wealth of Manchester. Liverpool life has been showy, Manchester extravagance has been marked by a certain solidity. The ball-rooms of Liverpool are always excellent and enjoyable. The invitations are restricted to dancers, the music and appointments are good, there is plenty of available room. The form of entertainment most popular in Manchester society is the dinner-party, at which London hours are kept, and the fruit and other table luxuries are purchased at London prices. Probably there is little to choose between the dinner-parties of the two northern cities. In both the wines produced will usually be of high excellence, as the habit of keeping an extensive cellar obtains widely among

those whose hospitalities are upon any considerable scale. A two years' supply of wine matured for drinking, in addition to wine in the process of maturing, is usually to be found in the house of the Manchester or Liverpool Amphitryon.

Of late years, private carriages have become almost universal amongst the richer classes in both places. In each of them the élite of society usually inhabit fine houses with conservatories and elaborate gardens in the outskirts, though in Liverpool some of those who are called "the best people" live in the town. Many of the richer families have houses in London, to which they come for the season; and some dwell all the year round at a considerable distance from the capital in which their business is, in the rural districts of Cumberland and Staffordshire. The visit to London late in the season is equally common to the local aristocracy of either town, as is the trip on the Continent, often extended as far as Egypt. Fishing, shooting, and hunting are the regular pastimes of the gentlemen; Liverpool has two local packs of harriers, and, as has been said, its yacht clubs as well. Cricket and football, which are common among all classes of the youths of manufacturing and commercial England, are played as much by the Irwell as the Mersey, Manchester being undoubtedly superior in cricket, while the palm at football must be given to Liverpool.

The change of the hours of business in the two cities has resulted in a species of social revolution. Formerly merchants were at their work by nine in the

morning, and seldom left it till eight or nine at night: now the universal closing hour in Liverpool is five p.m.; and in Manchester, although the warehouses may be open till seven, the principals leave about the same time. This alteration has naturally proved favourable to the development of club life, which is marked by special features of its own in the two places. In Manchester there are many clubs of which the chief—a very large one, and a fair specimen of the remainder—is the “Union.” Here the old practice of dining early is still in force. Between one and two, warehouses are universally deserted, and the club is full, though the early club dinner of some members may be only the substantial lunch of a few, which is to support them during the interval that has to elapse before a seven or eight o’clock dinner at home. Formerly the wealthiest manufacturers coming in from the country on market-days (Tuesdays and Fridays) were accustomed to dine at inn ordinaries between one and two, when, after dinner, spirit-bottles would be put on the table, and long clay pipes produced. But to-day the club coffee-room has taken the place of the inn ordinary. On the market-days business with many is supposed to be over at dinner-time, and cards and billiards are played during the afternoon. But on other days, and almost invariably in the evening, the Manchester club-houses are deserted, except at this mid-day interval. In Liverpool it is very different. The “Palatine,” a small and select club, which takes precedence of all the others, has comparatively few frequenters at the luncheon-hour. At

seven or eight o'clock it is always full, and both after and before dinner there is plenty of card-playing and billiards. Loungers fresh from the theatre drop in, and it is much frequented by officers of the garrison, who, as well as the leading barristers of the Northern Circuit, are honorary members. Altogether this club endeavours, not unsuccessfully, to imitate the clubs of London. If there is thus more of social pretension at Liverpool than at Manchester, such pretension is not without its influence on social education. Clubs are the cradle of sound public opinion in matters appertaining to manners, if not morals. Rowdyism and club life cannot co-exist. It should be added that the Gun Club and the Polo Club, both recently thoroughly established, make the resemblance between Liverpool and London still closer.

It is a marked peculiarity of the Lancashire mill-owner, educated and travelled though he be, to affect a certain humility or homeliness in his native place. He will know all his mill-hands personally, call them by their Christian names, nor be offended when he is saluted "How are you, John?" in return—a more respectful address, as has been said, not commending itself to the employed. The art connoisseur of Manchester—his cultivation often no mere pretence—will in business affect the Lancashire patois: will answer his neighbour when a bargain is being struck, "I'd loike to, but I canna do't." This has probably given rise to the proverbial saying, "Liverpool gentlemen and Manchester men." The

extent to which freedom of manner and independence of mien on the part of the mill-hands is carried at Manchester is not without its disadvantages. A free and easy mill-hand is apt in his sports to bear a disagreeably close likeness to the London rough. At the Manchester race-course, as has been said, and even at every open-air meeting, they muster in formidable force; and the stranger fresh from the United States might be disposed to compare the streets of Cottonopolis on the Saturday half-holiday to New Orleans on Sunday, where the coloured pedestrians monopolise the pavement, to the entire exclusion of the shrinking whites. There may be no reason to suppose that the morality of Liverpool is exceptionally high; but the rigid system of police inspection enforced at the great English seaports renders the signs of public immorality few in number, and when visible not of a kind to attract the fastidious voluptuary. Vice, when it is permitted to flaunt itself for the allurements of mixed nautical nationalities in the public street, only on the condition that it shall submit to the surveillance of the law, can scarcely fail to become a monster of a mien sufficiently hideous to ensure a very genuine amount of disgust.

Perhaps the least agreeable feature in the social life of Liverpool and Manchester—and it is to the former town that the remark applies with especial force—is the establishment of drinking-bars, and the extent to which they are patronised. This is an American importation, and it does not exercise a wholesome influence upon the young men of the place. Wine-shades,

bodegas, and saloons abound both above and underground. If they do not result in much actual drunkenness, the amount of tippling to which they lead, and the wanton waste of time which they involve, are deplorable. Twenty years ago the habit of drinking during business hours was comparatively unknown at Liverpool: now, it is so common as scarcely to attract attention, and certainly not to carry with it an adequate degree of stigma.

The opportunities of the higher education are abundant and excellent at each of the two capitals. Liverpool has its Royal Institution and Collegiate School, Manchester its Grammar School and Owen's College. An idea may be formed of the assiduity and success with which music, as well as art and letters, is cultivated, from the attendances at fortnightly concerts during the winter months at the Liverpool Philharmonic Hall, and at the concerts under Mr. Charles Hallé in the Manchester Free Trade Hall. Debating societies and literary clubs are also forthcoming, while both Liverpool and Manchester boast the possession of a newspaper press which, in utility, influence, and enterprise, is scarcely second to the press of London. Generally, indeed, and in Manchester in particular, at the present day the journalism of the provinces is provincial only in name, and, both in purely literary qualities and universality of well-digested intelligence, reaches the highest standards of metropolitan excellence. Almost as much may be said of the theatres of the two cities, which are the rehearsal grounds of

pieces destined for the London stage, and, on the occasion of their frequent visits, are the profitable empyrean of London stars.

It is the stately river on which it stands that gives Liverpool its peculiar, and in some respects unique, position among the great towns of England. The forests of masts, the spacious docks, the daily despatch from its harbours of grand ocean steamers bound to all parts of the world, the constant arrival of ships laden with treasures, the stir and bustle of a thousand wharves, the incessant and audible throbbings in the machinery of a commerce conducted with every quarter of the earth and every nation under heaven — these things are to be seen at Liverpool as they are to be seen nowhere else in England. Hull, Plymouth, and Newcastle-on-Tyne are mighty emporia of trade, whence argosies are sent forth to all points of the compass, each with some special trait of its own. Plymouth is identified with military transports and emigrant ships. Hull is identified with the spirited business carried on by the descendants of Danish forefathers—the stock which predominates in Yorkshire generally—and in the happy ventures in the Norwegian timber trade. If the great capital on the banks of the Tyne has a gloomy atmosphere, it is remarkable as the battle-field on which some of man's mightiest triumphs over the colossal obstacles which nature has opposed on his path have been won. For mile after mile stretches the long line of black factories. In that dark row of gaunt sheds, covering an area of upwards of two hundred acres,



the implements of destruction that annihilate armies, the Armstrong cannons, are forged. Such as these continue to be the ornaments of the banks on either side till Newcastle has been left behind, and a place has been reached where operations are going on, which, when completed, may bring a second Newcastle upon the scene.

But what we are chiefly concerned to see in this coal-blackened, antique Northumbrian capital, with its immemorial past, and its infinite future, its old buildings, venerable churches, hoary traditions—its inventions, improvements, and devices of yesterday, its busy plottings and cunning contrivances for to-morrow—is the influence exercised by science upon the course of the river. The Tyne is no longer the stream which nature made it; its bed is deepened, its channel changed. Headlands and promontories have been removed, and thousands of tons of soil have been uplifted from its depths, in order that ships of heavy and still heavier burden may float up to the very walls of the town. The chronicle of the work accomplished under the auspices of the River Tyne Commissioners alone is one of the most interesting and significant of the narratives of modern energy and enterprise—the record of a long war patiently and successfully waged against difficulties that the mightiest machinery in the world, guided by clear heads and steady hands, has alone surmounted. Fifty-one millions of tons of material were dredged out of the river in the three years between 1871 and

1873, were taken out to sea, and were finally deposited two or three miles from the entrance of the river, in a depth of water exceeding twenty fathoms at low tide. The width of the river has been increased in different parts, from one hundred and fifty to four hundred feet. A point, or cape, seventy-five feet above high water, which was a most dangerous obstruction to navigation, and which prevented those in charge of vessels from seeing vessels approaching on the inner side, has been cut away. Existing docks have been enlarged; and a new dock, with an enclosed water-space of ninety-four acres, surrounded by 3,650 lineal feet of dry water-quays, is being built. The commercial consequences of these colossal operations are seen in the increased size of the vessels frequenting the port. In twenty years the average tonnage of vessels has risen from 149 tons to more than 500.

Of the great towns of the North, Leeds, perhaps, has the largest future in store for it. For certain reasons, the counterpart of Leeds in the Midlands may be said to exist in Birmingham. Birmingham has made immense strides in wealth and importance during the last fifty years, but in point of opulence it is behind either Manchester or Liverpool. If there is in the Warwickshire capital a high average of substantial fortunes, there are few of the colossal incomes which have ceased to be remarkable in Lancashire. The social life of Birmingham, which gives a fair idea of the social life of Leeds, differs materially from that of Liverpool or Manchester. The fashionable thoroughfares of the

capital on the Mersey, with their long *queues* of carriages and footmen waiting in attendance about the shops which ladies love, present much the same appearance as the fashionable thoroughfares of the West End of London. In Birmingham, equipages planned on anything like the same scale as those of Liverpool are comparatively rare, and it may be doubted whether, twenty years back, there were more than a score of persons in Birmingham who kept their own carriages. Again, even at the present day, men-servants, with the exception of coachmen and grooms, are rare in the most opulent of Birmingham households; and where in Liverpool the front door is opened by a butler out of livery, in Birmingham the visitor is announced by a neat waiting-maid in her plain dress of black alpaca or merino. Yet Birmingham is not without its comforts, its luxuries, its great houses with handsome and gracefully laid-out gardens and artistically decorated interiors. There are many good picture collections in Birmingham, but they have been slowly, lovingly, and appreciatively acquired, not purchased ready-made as in Liverpool or Manchester. The Birmingham art connoisseur sets to work slowly and deliberately, buys for himself, judges for himself. Thus, whereas in a representative mansion in a great town in Lancashire paintings, ornaments, and furniture are often without a history, in a corresponding home at Birmingham these are the centre of many memories and associations, and have been the object of a chase, itself more pleasurable than possession.

Of the two there is more which Birmingham has in common with Manchester than with Liverpool. The capital of cotton and the capital of hardware supply materials both for parallel and contrast. As Manchester was the head-quarters of the National Educational Union, so was Birmingham the home of the National Education League. On the other hand, as Manchester—which also, by-the-by, first put forth the programme of the Free and Open Church system, the abolition of pews—is the cradle of Free Libraries, so is Birmingham the town in which the experiment was adopted with conspicuous energy and very little delay. Again, as Manchester has a reputation for picture-galleries and institutions, so, too, has Birmingham. These are probably the two towns in the kingdom in which these institutions—the most beneficent that a great city can have—flourish best. The industrial products of each capital are unlike. Manchester has few manufactures, but all of them on an immense scale; Birmingham many, some of them on an exceedingly small scale. On the Irwell cotton is everywhere; while in the metropolis of the Midlands the industries and trades of the entire earth seem collected. Everything that assists, graces, or destroys life comes from its teeming warehouses. There is no kind of implement used in war which Birmingham does not make, just as it makes the most delicately-pointed of needles and the coarsest, as well as the finest of locks, pins, jewellery, thimbles, watch-chains, caskets, awl-blades, buttons, screws, every variety of gun, and every tool which the manual worker

knows. The manufacture of many of these commodities requires an exceedingly modest "plant," and the consequence is that Birmingham abounds in small, independent manufacturers, who contrive to make a living out of the work which they can carry on in the courts and alleys that they inhabit.

As at Leeds so at Birmingham, ladies organise themselves into social as well as religious missionaries for the benefit of the working classes. They endeavour to inculcate the laws of hygiene, the rudiments of wholesome cookery, the simple laws of domestic economy upon the dwellers in the poorest districts of the town. Lectures, with the same or analogous intentions, are given in the schools that belong to the School Board at frequent intervals. In Birmingham, if nothing else has been done, the secret seems to have been discovered for utilising every available opportunity, and the entire sum of existing human intelligence.

## CHAPTER VII.

### TOWNS OF PLEASURE.

University Towns and Cathedral Towns—The New Oxford—Settlers in the Cathedral Close—County Towns and Garrison Towns—Exeter, Plymouth, Chilton, Cheltenham, Bath—Peculiarity in the Social Life of English Watering-places—Essentials of the English Pleasure Town—Sports and Games—their Influence upon English Society—Rapid Multiplication of English Seaside Watering-places—The Genesis of the English Watering-place—Common Features of these Towns—Scarborough—Buxton.

LEAVING now the great manufacturing centres of England, we may proceed to visit a few representative places, which, if not towns of pure pleasure, are neither exclusively nor chiefly devoted to the pursuit of business or trade. Country towns, cathedral towns, scholastic towns, and garrison towns—one very often uniting in itself the characteristics of all—may be described as holding a position midway between the abodes of pleasure and business. Of country towns and the influences visible in them, something has been already said.\* The cathedral towns of England are mainly pervaded, as might have been expected, by the ecclesiastical element, and the visitor to such a city as Salisbury has no sooner set foot within its boundaries than he is conscious of something like that lingering mediævalism, not yet completely expelled from Oxford.

Indeed, the ordinary English cathedral city has about it a more distinctly old-world air than the great

\* See Chap. V, Municipal Government.

academic capital of the country. The last ten years have wrought a complete change in Oxford, and have assimilated it in many of its social aspects to a London suburb. When, several decades since, it was first proposed to extend the Great Western Railway line from Didcot to beneath the august shadows of the spires and towers on the Isis, it was objected by the champions of the old régime that irretrievable injury would be done both to Oxford manners and Oxford morals, by bringing the place into immediate contact with outside existence. The townsmen, it was urged, would be less passively obedient subjects of the academic rule. Undergraduates would be constantly relieving their studies with trips to the Metropolis; even the Common-room—that apartment consecrated to grave talk or discreet humour, and crusted port—would soon acquire a perilous likeness to a London club. All that was feared, and more than was feared, have been accomplished. Town and gown still lead tolerably harmonious lives, but town has an independent existence and trade of its own, which it had not in the pre-railway days. College fellows, and even college fellows who are tutors, live almost as much in London as in Oxford; while among the guests at the high table in college halls, London guests, very often of great distinction, may frequently be seen. The institution of married fellowships has brought to Oxford an element of domestic life which is entirely new. The establishment at Oxford of a military dépôt has given Oxford a society which it little dreamed of in bygone days.

There are dinner-parties and dances in nearly as great abundance during the term-time as at Bath or Cheltenham. An entire colony of professors, tutors, and lecturers, with their wives and children, has sprung up on what twenty years ago was vacant ground. Where once the pale student paced solitary are nursery-maids and perambulators, while audacious engineers have even dared to unite these outlying suburbs with one of the most picturesque thoroughfares in Europe—the Oxford High Street—by a tramway such as runs from Islington to Holloway, or from Westminster to Woolwich.

In none of the typical cathedral cities of England is there anything like this amount of busy, bustling, various life. Even in those where there is a considerable quantity of business done, such as Chester, Lincoln, Durham, and Peterborough, there is always a quarter of the town that seems never to lose the deep charm of unruffled quiet which an Oxford college garden seldom knows except in the heart of the long vacation. Round the cathedral itself is a close—here an open expanse of well-kept turf, and here dotted with a group of forest-trees. The shadow cast by the tall Gothic tower extends to a row of houses, ranging in space and design from the cottage to the mansion, but all equally comfortable, dignified, and inviting to repose. These occupy, perhaps, three sides of the entire enclosure. Some of them are inhabited by the ecclesiastical officers of the place—canons, minor canons, and chaplains. Others, again, have as their inmates



families who are attracted by some tie of kinship or sentiment to the spot, and have settled there tranquilly to spend the residue of their days. Few echoes from the outer world break the calm of this hallowed precinct. In the afternoon the noise of carriage-wheels is heard at intervals, and perhaps in one of the corners of the close stands the cathedral school, whither twice a day boys with their satchels go, and whence twice a day they issue with clatter and laughter. But the most familiar sound to those who have pitched their tents in this peaceful spot, and that which chiefly strikes the stranger's ear, is the note of the cathedral bell summoning worshippers to prayer, and the musical chimes that ring out once or twice a day. The most noticeable sight is the officiating clergyman walking to the cathedral, clad in surplice and college cap. To some of the dwellers hard by these spectacles are not only the best known, but, next to the cathedral itself when service is being held, the only spectacles they care for. There are many aspects of social life in a cathedral close, and more than one novelist of the day has given us a series of clever and effective pictures of the mutual jealousies and heartburnings which are concealed in episcopal and diaconal breasts. But Mrs. Proudie is not necessarily the predominating spirit of the place, and here, under the cathedral shadow, there could probably be found ladies to whom the world contains very little but that cathedral and its sacred functions. Life is to them but one religious exercise, and the great fane reared by the piety and devotion of

centuries ago is the only earthly object which sorrow and affliction have left them as the visible centre of their existence and aspirations.

The cathedral city may have indeed an aspect of its life very different from this. It may be a great commercial city like Bristol, where the consecrated fabric looks down upon a busy river, crowded wharves, and thoroughfares choked with traffic; or like Durham, where the stately pile is blackened with the smoke from furnaces and factories; or like Exeter, which is a county capital and a garrison town as well. Exeter, moreover, has not only a considerable trade of its own, but is a picturesque metropolis of western pleasure-makers as well. It is, to begin with, a great centre for all West of England tourists, and it has no lack of regular residents, many of them attracted from a great distance by the health and beauty of the neighbourhood, many locally associated with it, and possessed of friends, near whom they wish to be, already settled in that part of the world. Clergymen, military and naval officers, retired civilians, swell the list of residents. There is much to do, to see, and talk about. Even without the regiments, or sections of regiments, quartered here, there would still be plenty of life and gaiety, for Exeter is as good a specimen of an English county town at once prosperous in business, and with a quiet air of aristocratic distinction about it, as could be found within the four seas. There are balls, concerts, flower-shows and promenades, picnics, excursions, and pleasure expeditions of every kind. Here, too, as

elsewhere, the military element coalesces happily and closely with the local or purely county element. Gentlemen who have been quartered in Exeter—and what is true of Exeter is true of many other garrison towns—when bearing Her Majesty's commission, have been so much struck by the attractions of the place, that when their term of service has expired, they have become permanent inhabitants. There are various and substantial educational advantages for their children, and there are possible alliances for their marriageable daughters. Of Plymouth it may be said that all which Exeter has it boasts also. Indeed, Plymouth, of the two, though it has not a cathedral, is a focus of even more social movement and variety, seeing that it is not only, like Exeter, a county town, but in addition a great commercial, naval, and military station. The same conditions are forcibly realised in the cases of Canterbury and York. Both are garrison towns and cavalry stations; the latter also the head-quarters of the Northern District. There is a close intimacy between officers and the county or city gentry, and these cathedral towns boast always of a pleasant semi-military and official society which keeps them generally full.

A majority of the purely pleasure towns of England are of very modern growth. Their development in every instance presents nearly the same features, and is marked by much the same incidents. The chief elements in their composition are identical, and the objects which belong to one are common to all. It is indispensable that they should possess certain physical qualifications

and aptitudes, that they should have a more or less organised machinery of amusement and pleasure ; that they should be endowed with certain distinct hygienic qualifications, such as mineral springs or a particularly fine climate ; that they should have one or two tolerably good schools, a popular preacher, a fashionable doctor, and that they should, if possible, be within tolerably easy distance of the meets of a good pack of foxhounds. Bath, Cheltenham, and Leamington are all indebted for much of their prosperity at the present day to the qualification last named. They are capitals of pleasure and also of health, but they are in addition capitals of sport. Bath, indeed, is not quite so conveniently situated for the fox-hunter, but Cheltenham and Leamington have each many of the recommendations of Market Harborough or Melton, as well as no lack of attractions for intending settlers all the year round. These towns have, too, a reputation of some antiquity. Bath was for years a national as well as a provincial capital, and still continues gallantly to hold its own as one of the great inland spas of the kingdom. Cheltenham and Clifton belong to the same category, but at Cheltenham there is probably more fashion, and at Clifton there is certainly more wealth. Than these three towns, Cheltenham, Clifton, and Bath, there is none more beautiful to be found in the United Kingdom. So far as picturesqueness of architecture and of situation is concerned, there are few cities in the world with which Bath need fear comparison. Its houses, considering the period in which these houses were built.

are as good as the London houses. With the exception of Portland Place, there is no street in London which is as fine as Pulteney Street, and no square or terrace to be compared with the Circus in Bath. Nor are the natural and artificial beauties of Clifton and Cheltenham much less striking. The great feature in Cheltenham, in addition to its delightful public gardens, is the really superb boulevard leading from the Queen's Hotel into the High Street, known as the Promenade, with its shops and trees on either side. In Clifton there are not only the natural beauties of the Downs, with the glimpses and breezes of the Severn Sea, but there are also stately mansions, inhabited mainly by Bristol merchants, in their own perfectly ordered grounds on the central highway leading to the table-land beyond.

It is not enough that the English pleasure town should possess a fine situation, good houses, picturesque views, and popular clergymen; it must have also good schools, and the favourable opinion of eminent doctors. The medical profession can do more towards making or marring the fortune of an English watering-place than architects, land agents, or even Nature herself. To give a place a bad climate is to take certain steps towards inflicting a calamity of undefinable extent upon the landlords; and in any town once popular in which rents have suddenly depreciated in value it will usually be found that the malignant influences of the medical profession have been at work. Having obtained a favourable certificate from the faculty, the watering-place which wishes to be popular must next contrive to

equip itself with one or two popular churches, and at least one successful school. The proprietary college which may or may not subsequently succeed in obtaining a royal charter is a stereotyped feature in the modern watering-place. There may be the spa, the boiling, hot, and tepid waters invaluable for rheumatic patients, the chalybeate so unpleasant to the taste and so beneficial to the system, but unless there is the great school it will be as idle to think of the place prospering as it would be to dream of its existence without the great hotel. Cheltenham, Malvern, Leamington, Clifton, Brighton, and Bath—though in the last-named place there has not been the same amount of concentration as in the others—are each of them names suggestive not only of the hygienic value of waters and atmosphere, but of schools which will compare not unfavourably with those of older foundation. The significance of the fact is not affected by the relation in which the school may stand to the prosperity of the place, whether, as at Cheltenham, it has been one of the efficient causes of the prosperity; or whether, as at Leamington, Clifton, and Brighton, it has been one of the material consequences: the great thing is to have the school.

Nor is the church, or rather the variety of churches, less essential. Every English watering-place or town of pleasure is also a centre of English religious thought, a representative battle-ground of English theology. University professors and doctors, ecclesiastical controversialists holding important offices, may preside over the evolutions of the combatants from afar, and may

supply the principles which are the armoury whence the weapons of local disputation are drawn. It is not the function of the great leaders to mix in the heart of the vulgar fray. If hard fighting, dexterous tactics, skilful manœuvring are to be seen, it is to the pleasure towns of provincial England, where there is enough of leisure, idleness, and spinsterdom for militant ecclesiasticism, that one must go. Roughly speaking, there are two demarcating lines which mainly divide the community in these places. Both of them are of venerable antiquity: one is the geographical and the other the religious. When Solon first took in hand the legislation of ancient Athens, he found a state of things in which the inhabitants of hill, plain, and vale were separated by the most embittered contentions. There is hardly a pleasure resort in England in which the outlines of an animosity based upon the same principles may not be traced. The inhabitants of the crescents and terraces may, for example, consider themselves superior to, or may be looked upon as natural enemies by, those who have established themselves on the plateau at their feet, or in the still lower lying ground beyond. The religious sentiment is an even more prolific parent of cliques and coteries. It has greater power than social rivalry or professional jealousy.

Yet even thus, though supplied with its sanitary credentials, its big hotels, its educational institutions, its local rivalries, its religious enmities, the English town of pleasure lacks something to be quite complete. It requires an entire machinery of social amusements.

Some account will be given in another chapter of the pastimes and the recreations of the great masses of the people. It is to the pleasure towns of England that we must go to witness, in their most highly finished shape, the amusements of which polite society is especially fond. Every form of recreation that of late years has become popular in England has, if not originated in, been cultivated with conspicuous success at these local capitals of select enjoyment. Croquet, rinking, lawn-tennis, each have had their day, and a long day too, at some one or other of these provincial pleasure capitals of the kingdom. The immense popularity of each in succession serves to emphasise a fact, which in this busy, hard-toiling age we may imperfectly realise, that there is amongst us an immense number of persons of both sexes who are not merely ready but anxious to make, by their patronage and favour, the fortune of any one who will be good enough to invent for them a new mode of agreeably, and more or less athletically, beguiling the passing hours. Almost all the more important pleasure towns are in turn the scenes of tournaments between proficient in some one of these pastimes. Archery was a few years ago the favourite sport of society at Cheltenham; but we move quickly nowadays, and archery was soon voted slow. Later there have been contests from time to time for championships and grand prizes at lawn-tennis, just as a few years previously the game was croquet at every place at which pleasure-seekers congregate.

The second noticeable fact suggested by the great



development of these recreations is the superiority which we are gradually establishing over many of our insular prejudices. In these games English families, whose members are at first mutually strangers, mix freely with each other, and speedily find themselves on terms of more or less intimate acquaintance. Naturally this process has had the effect of very materially modifying the relations which formerly existed between young English gentlemen and young English ladies. When a number of young men and young women meet each other, day after day, on skating-rinks and lawn-tennis grounds, whatever the effort to keep parties distinct, some amount of fusion is inevitable. The casual acquaintances made at these games are perpetuated on the promenade, and improved in the ball-room; and the daughter of the English middle-class parent, who, twenty years ago, was living in a state of almost vestal seclusion, has now acquaintances on every side. Her parents may approve or disapprove of this state and tendency of things, but it is very seldom that they can hope successfully to fight against it.

The social consequences of the insular position and the picturesquely indented coast-line of England are quite as important in their way as the political. The impulse which drove George IV. to Brixham, as it was then called, and Brighton, as it is called to-day, is the same which now urges the entire English people to the shores of the sea when summer has come. The desire animating all sections of the population to scent the fresh odours of the ocean is so great that wherever

nature presents the slightest opportunities and capacities, there a watering-place is at once created. Where one of these resorts is fairly established, a number of others are sure to follow in an inconceivably short space of time. The consequence is that the whole littoral of the island is, with occasional intervals, a fringe of seaside towns of pleasure. On the north-west coast, Rhyl, Llandudno, Penmaenmawr, Llanfairfechan, Bangor, Beaumaris, are presently followed by Barmouth and Aberystwith. The south-western coast of England, on the large inland bay made by the Bristol Channel, from Portishead, at the mouth of the Avon, to the Land's End, presents the same succession of pretty and popular resorts. On the south coast one passes Plymouth, Torquay, Dawlish, Teignmouth, Sidmouth, Seaton, and Beer, and only leaves Devonshire to find oneself in a superb bay, with shining sands, with a magnificent breakwater in front, and a handsomely-built town inland. This town is Weymouth. Passing thence eastward, one skirts the Hampshire coast and the Isle of Wight, the bluffs of Sussex, and the cliffs of Kent, witnessing the repetition of the same picturesque phenomenon at intervals of scarcely a league. Between the North Foreland and Flamborough Head are situated at least fifty similar pleasure towns, whose population in the season would probably be in excess of that of the whole of the United Kingdom a hundred years ago.

All this provision for the pleasure and health wants of the people represents a great deal of business enterprise, much profit, and some loss. These new watering-

places have often restored the fortunes of impoverished proprietors of neighbouring estates, or increased to fabulous amounts the incomes of astute landed gentry, who have realised the possibilities of the place and developed its capabilities with much enterprise and judgment. Not seldom, the advantage is reaped by some go-ahead speculator, whether in bricks and mortar or in land. The way in which the edifice of success has been reared is in many cases the same. Having discovered some available locality, fronting the sea, the watering-place creator at once sets to work to cover it with houses. He has, at a venture, obtained the ground-rent of the soil upon tolerably easy terms; he has an infinite faith in the development of his property—by advertisement. It is desirable to procure from some recognised medical authority a certificate as to its singular salubrity. If he can also discover a mineral spring in some unsuspected recess, he will materially have improved the chances of the new experiment. It is much to be wished that the scene of his operations should be tolerably close to one or two thriving towns, and that it should be, if possible, on the main line of railway to and from the metropolitan terminus. If it has no railway station at all—and in this case he will have been a bold man to have selected it—he will labour night and day until he has secured the requisite railway extension. Once the new venture is fairly started, all will follow in due time, and in pretty regular order of succession. The streets, shops, and hotels having been built, and a promenade having

been established, the next thing is to secure the services of a band of fairly competent musicians. Pleasure-gardens will then begin to be laid out, furnished probably with a skating-rink, and certainly with the inevitable lawn-tennis courts. Before long the admiring visitors and the inhabitants, hungry after novelty, will perceive that a building, which is to consist of an aquarium, winter gardens, and concert-room, commences to rise. It will be finished with great promptitude, and covered with a crystal dome. Standing on a lofty cliff, the edifice commands a fine view of the sea; and the next thing will be to establish, by subterranean passages, communication between the shore below and the terrace walks above. Meanwhile, in the more frequented portions of the town, great changes and improvements have been taking place. A town hall has been built, which is alternately used for concerts, recitations, and religious, literary, and scientific lectures; a branch of Mudie's library has been established at the post office; the rows of pony-chaises and donkeys for hire have increased; and the lodging-house keepers are doing a brisk business. There is a constant succession of arriving and departing guests, and the place, if it prospers, is only quite deserted in the depth of winter. If, however, the gentlemen who have authority over the spot are really as acute as they ought to be, they will at once establish a winter season. This is being done now at most of the chief watering-places of the United Kingdom.

It is natural that the descendants of Norsemen and Vikings should display the same spirit, though

in a different shape, of adventurous enterprise which was the boast of their forefathers, close to the sea whose empire they have inherited from their forefathers. Every well-to-do sea-side haunt is a faithful testimony to the bold activity that has descended to this century from pre-historic times. English watering-places are the most determinedly go-ahead places on the face of the earth. No sort of improvement is introduced in architecture or drainage which is not immediately taken up. Very often there are not merely new works to be done, but old abuses to be rooted out. When a quiet fishing village is suddenly exaggerated into a large pleasure town there are many sanitary defects in existence to be remedied, as well as new sanitary precautions to be taken. It is curious to notice how in some of these cases the new town is visibly an excrescence upon the older settlements. While at Hastings, St. Leonard's, and Brighton the development has been equable, the old town spreading out in all directions, the Eastbourne of to-day is at some little distance from the Eastbourne of old times, and in the middle of the new streets there may be seen growing forest trees of remote antiquity. There are other features which the seaside towns of England generally possess in common. For most of their patronage they are dependent on the middle classes—the highest have little to say to the pleasure resorts of their own country. When the London season is over they go abroad, or on a round of country house visits, and this occupation is enough till the season

for their return to London arrives. Flying visits are indeed paid to Brighton, Folkestone, Hastings, or elsewhere, by the most distinguished representatives of English rank and fashion, and places of mainly sanitary resort, like Torquay, have always a fair proportion of titled or patrician denizens, ordered thither by their doctors. It is further to be noticed in connection with the pleasure towns on the English coast, that though extensively patronised by visitors from all parts of England, they consistently preserve their local character. Scarborough is still mainly the pleasure town of the North of England, just as Brighton is the great holiday resort of London; as Folkestone and Dover are mainly peopled with the natives of Kent and the neighbouring counties; or as Barrow-in-Furness or Morecambe Bay are with the representatives of Lancashire manufacturing industry. There are also certain aspects and seasons common to all these watering-places. However exclusive they may pride themselves on being, they are still scenes of periodical holidays and cheap excursions, and Margate or Gravesend cannot upon certain occasions boast a more genuinely cockney appearance than Brighton. They have, too, their stated times for particular classes of visitors, and the Scarborough or Brighton hotels or lodging-houses are full of very different sorts of people respectively in the early summer, the late summer and autumn, and the winter months.

In their social life there are at once marked points of similarity and difference. They have all of them their clubs, their picturesque drives, their promenades

on the pier, and most of them have really noble concert-rooms and institutions which, without the card-playing, are very much like the *Établissements* of Continental watering-places. In all there is pretty much about the same amount of flirtation and love-making, of gallantry and scandal, of pleasure parties by sea and land. The same average of gentlemen inhale the inspiring virtues of the sea breezes by the highly rational process of spending their days in the tobacco-laden atmosphere of billiard-rooms. There are the same eccentricities and extravagances of costume and possibly of conduct. But in small matters of social etiquette each place has more or less a definite code of its own, and as much may be said of social amusements upon a larger scale. The interchange of hospitalities, including dances between the inmates of different hotels, is hardly known except at Scarborough. At Buxton something of the sort takes place, but not to an equal extent. On the other hand, Buxton has advantages and recommendations which are exclusively its own. Standing a thousand feet above the level of the sea, it not only boasts a purer and clearer atmosphere than is perhaps to be breathed on any other spot in the United Kingdom, and a warm mineral spring of virtue so powerful that it is unsafe to bathe in it without having previously taken medical advice, but public gardens of extreme beauty, in which is situated a concert-room where music that is not surpassed in any pleasure town of England or of the Continent is to be heard.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### COMMERCIAL AND FINANCIAL ENGLAND.

Capabilities of the Subject for Popular Treatment—Relations of Finance and Commerce—Their Cosmopolitan Character—London the World-Centre—Representatives of our Financial System—Bank of England and Lombard Street—The Stock Exchange—How Loans are granted—London the Centre of Commerce—Characteristics of English Trade—Signs of Change—Possible Causes of Decline—Hope for the Future.

THE mechanism of the money market and the mysteries of the organisation of credit may seem abstractions to the many, yet in some way or other they make themselves felt as the most concrete of realities by all. They constitute not merely a system of procedure, but an aggregate of individual men. Above all things their growth has coincided with the development of English influence and power in the world at large. It is credit which lies at the foundation of English trade, and which has chiefly enabled us to rear the edifice of national prosperity that is the result of centuries. A practical investigation of the different component parts of this colossal fabric will bring us face to face with the changing aspects of our financial and commercial system, and will reveal the fact that in this, as in other regions of activity and enterprise, England is now in a transitional state.

It is not necessary to unthread the maze of causes that have contributed to place England at the centre of the finance and commerce of the world. Enough for our purpose that she is there; and as London



is the heart of the British Empire, it is the heart of universal enterprise, which regulates and feeds the pulses of life that beat throughout the whole vast framework. All roads may be said to lead to London, and all impulses to trading activity, all outgoings of enterprise and energy that build up markets in the most distant parts of the earth, make their effects visible and palpable in the metropolis. An abundant harvest in the wide sweeps of the Western States of America cheapens wheat in Mark Lane; famines in India and China, which diminish the ability of the natives of these countries to purchase our cotton goods, reduce the demand for our manufactures, and make our produce markets flat and stagnant; bountiful supplies of the precious metals or scarcity in the output of the gold and silver mines of California and Australia affect in the first instance the money market, and afterwards, by their action on prices, carry their influence into the whole range of the relations of supply and demand in the market values of all sorts of commodities. There is a reflux of influence from England and from London, as well as an influx of mingled agencies flowing from all parts of the globe towards the same common centre. The movement is one of action and reaction; but so closely are the streams of counter influences intermingled that we cannot lay a finger on any one spot and boldly affirm that here is the *primum mobile*; at this point is the mainspring of the universal system. Efflux and reflux, action and reaction, ebb and flow, are at work throughout the entire scheme; and so closely,

pervasively, and intimately do they co-operate that no quickness and delicacy of discrimination can detect the beginnings of their separate workings. We can only track them in their multitudinous results. We find out, sometimes, through the sudden snapping of a weak link in the complex organisation, that there has long been a flaw in one part or the other of the huge machine. It may be the failure of a bank, or the collapse of some great firm, bringing in its train ruin to thousands, and multiplying failures throughout the length and breadth of the land. We are then able to trace the causes which have been slowly fretting against the weak spot till at last it gives way with a crash, but it is always difficult, if not impossible, to isolate any one set of agencies and decide with dogmatic assurance that they and nothing else have brought about the interruption—that it has been the panic in the United States a few years previously, or the famine in the East, or the destructive wars in the West, or the gradual reaction from over-inflation under a false currency system, or the bad harvests of successive years, or changes in the habits of populations that supplied markets for our goods, or any other of the hundred and one causes which may have all contributed in their degree to induce the final catastrophe. The streams of commerce may have been flowing languidly to the common centre, and in its turn that centre, with diminished powers of absorption and reduced capacity to scatter the beneficent products throughout other lands, may have failed to discharge the functions that were easy in times of

vigorous health. But we shall rarely be able to set apart the intermingling currents and unravel the intertwining threads so as to fix upon each its precise share of the responsibility. It is with commerce and with the finance which is partly the creature and yet in great measure the creator of commerce, as with the phenomena of life—we can follow the processes by and through which it works and produces its effects, but when we reach the border line between life and death, we are baffled, and the original obscurity remains as impenetrable as ever.

Of late years in particular the most prominent feature of trade and commerce, as of finance, has been their increasingly international and cosmopolitan character. The laws under which they act and the tendencies they are ever striving to realise are peculiar to no country or people, for they are illustrated by all. To this fact is due the universality of their effects and influences. This universality is in great measure due to their diversity; so that what is lacking in the forces and elements supplied by one nation is supplemented from another. There must be a common meeting point for all these varying and counterworking factors, and this is found in the British metropolis. Not all London, however, but only as to geographical extent and locality one comparatively small section of it. If England be the heart of international trade and cosmopolitan finance, and London be the heart of England, the City is the heart of London. The City, too, has its peculiar nerve-centre. Within the

superficial area on which stand the Bank of England, the Stock Exchange, the various edifices of which Lombard Street consists, and, on the other hand, the several spots where dealers congregate, and which constitute the metropolitan markets, may be said to be ranged the congeries of local habitations and names that give regulations to the finance and commerce of the whole world. For the sake of distinctness, although, as in regard to other phenomena already spoken of, the diverse series of influences run into, overlap, and reciprocally act and re-act upon each other, it may be useful to take the broad distinction, which we shall work out into clearer detail, of Financial London and Commercial London. All the facts, laws, influences, and tendencies of trading, enterprise, mercantile or monetary speculation, credit with its widespread and multifarious ramifications, and exports and imports of luxuries and necessities, together with their means of distribution in virtue of which as made exchangeable they become economical phenomena, will fall into their places under one or the other of these heads.

Without attempting to establish which of the two series has precedence in the order of time—for it would be difficult in regard to this as to the other facts already adverted to, to draw any broad line of demarcation—we select, for convenience sake, Financial London, which will mean, it is hardly necessary to say, Financial England. To give a vivid sense of reality to the subject, let us then take the Bank of England, with its surrounding feeders and suckers in the banking circle of Lombard

Street, as the one leading representative, and the Stock Exchange, the great mart for dealings in all kinds of stocks and shares, as the other. The Stock Exchange is pre-eminently cosmopolitan. Among its members are brokers and "jobbers" of many nationalities. Specially conspicuous among them are the descendants of the great Semitic race. The Bank of England, on the contrary, is, or is supposed to be, national, and as the agent of the Government and the keeper of the Government balances it ought to be so. Yet little consideration is required to show that the Bank of England is very much more—though in some respects it is also very much less—than its name would seem to indicate. Outside and beyond the specially national functions which the Bank is bound to discharge in being the banker of the Government, the issuer of notes that, under certain conditions, are legal tender and therefore national currency, in taking charge of Government securities and paying the dividends thereon to the holders, and in discharging the other various offices of a bank for the public, there are other multifarious functions which it is compelled by its position to fulfil. Bills from all parts of the world are drawn payable in London, as in other capitals, because it is convenient to have recognised places at which the international trading balances and the balances between the merchants and traders of different countries may be settled; while, by mere force of geographical circumstances, London has, in a special degree, drifted into the position of international Clearing-House of the

world, and the banking functions connected with it are largely, though not exclusively, discharged by the Bank of England, which is known as the bankers' bank at home. This is not all. In the final resort, when balances remain to be discharged as between one nation and another, after all the complicated mechanism of bills set off against each other has accomplished its utmost, they must be paid in gold. There is no other means of settling the final outcome of the mass of transactions in international commerce except through the precious metals—gold and silver; and while silver is mainly employed in the East, gold is chiefly used in the West. London consequently, as the convenient centre that may be drawn upon from all parts of the world, must possess a stock of gold sufficient to meet the demands that may be made on it. The Bank of England, as the banker of the nation, is the custodian of this treasure; and being thus constituted a bullion storehouse, to it flow all supplies of the precious metal that reach our shores. Circumstances have thus caused it to become a dealer in bullion as well as a banker. The Bank of England, in fact, discharges wider than national banking functions. Along with the joint stock and private banks by which it is surrounded, and with which its relations are close and intimate—for as the central institution it keeps the reserves of the other bankers as well as its own—it represents the banking of the metropolis, and therefore, in the final issue, of England. Owing to

England's world-wide commercial relations, this same banking system, and the subsidiary agencies by which it is buttressed, acts as the general international Clearing House; and bearing in mind the duties that further devolve on it from the fact that London is the great bullion centre, we can form some faint idea of the multiplicity and complexity of its operations, and the vastness of the weight which presses on the central pivot around which the entire commercial and financial system revolves.

It will make the points we have indicated more distinct, as well as help the course of our argument afterwards, if we explain here the way in which the financial position which London has thus come to occupy was gained. Its mission as the international Clearing House and the bullion centre is not, it may be observed, necessarily permanent. It is only within a comparatively short time that London has assumed these cosmopolitan functions. Going back little more than a century we find that Amsterdam was the centre of international commerce, and the place where international balances were settled. Still later, at a period when London had assumed more prominence than formerly, the honours were divided; Paris being one of the two centres, though London was steadily gaining on the French capital. By degrees, owing to the greater security of capital in our insular abodes during eras of wars and revolutions on the Continent, the supremacy passed wholly over to the British metropolis. It depends upon the co-operation

of very various lines of influences and streams of tendency whether or not the British metropolis is to maintain its autocratic position. It is possible to suppose that England—and therefore London—may remain the head-quarters of the world's capital, and the settling-place of the cash differences of nations, after writing off international debits and credits, merely because it is convenient that there should be some such recognised spot. But there would be very little security in the pre-eminence of this international harbour of refuge if its titles rested on no more secure basis. If convenience alone were to decide, why might not New York, or New Orleans, or Cincinnati, or some other American city, do as well as London; for are not the United States at least as likely to be free from the disturbances of foreign war? The only assurance of the permanent maintenance of its position by London must lie in the coincidence of the general convenience with the continuance of our own mercantile activity, by retaining the lead we have in general enterprise. Thus the financial and the commercial dovetail into each other again here. Our supply of skilled labour and our supply of capital are the two main considerations that have given us our advantage; and should these continue to be happily directed all may be well.

Turn now to the second representative of England's cosmopolitan finance—the Stock Exchange. It is difficult for city men to conceive a London without a Stock Exchange; yet it is only half a century



since it became an institution of much magnitude, and very much less than that since it assumed anything like its present dimensions. Primarily—as already indicated—it is the great mart for the sale of various classes of documentary securities. Its organisation is such, that there is a ready market within its walls for all sorts of stocks and shares that may be offered for sale; and any intending buyer of any particular kind of security may be reasonably confident that by employing one of its recognised members, or brokers, he will get what he wants. This is the main service which is rendered by the Stock Exchange; and it is facilitated through the presence in the building of a class of middle-men called “jobbers,” who are always buying and selling, and make their profits out of minute “turns” in the prices of the market, but rarely hold what they purchase beyond the day. It is the “jobber’s” function to “make a price;” that is to say, a broker who is instructed to buy or sell a certain number of railway shares by a client will not go to another broker acting for other clients. It would take a long time to find out any one who might have, and might wish to dispose of, the particular kind of stock which he or his client wanted. Instead of spending his time in trying to find that out, a quest which might prove futile, the broker goes to a “jobber” and asks him to “make a price,” to buy or sell, as the case may be. It becomes the “jobber’s” business to complete the transaction in such a way as, by securing a minute fraction in his own

favour, to make a profit out of it; and the presence of "jobbers" has thus the effect of making ready dealings nearly always possible.

Most people who read the newspapers must have formed in their own minds some vague conception of what the Stock Exchange is like; but probably few who have done so would not feel their fancy-picture sadly disturbed if they were to make their way any day to one of the several entrances to the large building—in the immediate neighbourhood of the Bank of England—in which the business we have described is carried on. The public are not admitted within the turbulent precincts of "the House," and all the anxious inquirer can do is to scan it from one of its several exits and entrances, at Capel Court, or Hercules Passage, or Throgmorton Street. Stationed at the open door, he sees busy men—the brokers and "jobbers"—thronging in and out, occasionally stopping to speak to a client by whom he has been "called" out—a process performed by attendants, who shout with stentorian voices through a tube the name of the individual wanted, until the word is taken up inside, and made by a second stentorian voice to reverberate through the room. The building is parcelled out so that separate quarters are assigned to the dealers in different classes of securities; thus we have the Foreign, the American, the Home Railway Markets, and so on. The din and clatter inside are deafening and confusing; though in this respect the Paris Bourse bears away the palm from the London Stock Exchange.

In this building, out of and into which flows almost uninterruptedly the stream of brokers and jobbers, dealings for the sale and purchase of all kinds of securities are carried on ceaselessly from morning till afternoon. But, in truth, we have gained a very partial conception of what the Stock Exchange is and does when we have only learned to understand so much as this. It, too, like the Bank of England, has other varied, vast, and complicated work. In addition to men selling shares of banks, railways, or gas companies, for which they wish to get the value in money, and others performing the counter-process of buying such securities for investment purposes, so as to obtain a good return in the shape of yearly interest for their money, there is a mighty array of what are called speculative transactions. Speculative accounts are opened by respectable brokers on behalf of clients, in whose ability to meet possible losses they have confidence, or from whom, if there is any shade of doubt, a sum of money is exacted, under the name of "cover," to assure the broker that he shall not lose, however the speculative business may turn out. Buying or selling speculatively—being, that is to say, in Stock Exchange parlance, a "bull" or a "bear"—does not mean that the client for whom the broker buys wishes to purchase the stock he has directed to be bought so as to become its owner, or that he has any supply of the stock he offers to sell, so as to be able to hand it over to the person who may have bid the highest price for it. The "bull" buys in the

hope that when the time for arranging the next fortnightly account—at what is called the settlement—comes round the price of the stock will have risen, in which case he will pocket as his profit the “difference” between the price at which he bought and the price on the account-day, *minus* the broker’s commission. And in like manner the “bear” sells, hoping that by account-day the price of the stock he offered may have gone down, when the “difference” between the two prices—again less broker’s commission—will go into his pocket. As, however, instead of rising the price may fall, or instead of falling it may rise, the “bull” or the “bear” must pay the “differences” when they are against him. So that in reality this kind of dealing by means of speculative accounts comes to be a mere series of wagers that stocks will fall or rise, and is justly held to be gambling by the law, so that the “differences” cannot be recovered by legal process. But although this introduces an additional element of uncertainty into the business, since the law cannot be set in motion to enforce the completion of gambling bargains, speculation is carried on in such a variety of ways, and to such an enormous extent, through the machinery of the Stock Exchange, that no description of our financial organisation would be complete without some reference to speculative accounts.

In addition to being a market for investment and speculation, the Stock Exchange is also the intermediary through which public loans, home and foreign, are raised. This function has developed naturally out of

the other functions spoken of. The Stock Exchange is the place where investors, having money which they wish to employ to good purpose, meet and bargain, through agents, with those who have securities to sell that yield returns in interest to their holders. Consequently, it is part of the duty of those who have the regulation and control of the Stock Exchange to arrange the conditions on which stocks, shares, and other securities are allowed to be dealt in, so as to be brought within reach of investors and speculators. As it is scarcely conceivable that any loan on the part of a foreign state or a home company would be taken up, that is to say, subscribed for, unless it could be dealt in on the Stock Exchange, the authorities of that institution, who are represented by the committee for general purposes, have large powers of promoting or frustrating the very largest financial operations on the part of foreign governments and home corporations. A foreign country in need of a loan always tries to domiciliate it in London, so as to have a wider area from which to attract subscribers than can be found anywhere else in the world, and so as to obtain a quotation from the Stock Exchange that will make the scrip of such a loan capable of being dealt in readily.

It may simplify matters yet further if we sketch in outline the steps of the process of issuing a foreign loan. The enumeration of these may suggest the necessity for reforms; but it is no part of our business to consider that matter here.

The first step taken when a foreign state—let us say Egypt, for example's sake—has applied to some well-known financial house whose name is a power of itself, is the drawing up of a secret "contract" between the government wanting the money and the London bankers, who will on the faith of the anticipated success of the loan give advances on terms profitable to themselves. A prospectus is then made ready by some competent firm of London solicitors, setting forth in as glowing terms as possible the advantages which will accrue to investors if they lend their money in return for the bonds of the said foreign government. Copies of this prospectus are forwarded several days in advance to an enterprising advertising firm having wide connections, which undertakes to do the advertising for a consideration. But these agents in London do a great deal more than the advertising. Most of them keep their "literary man," whose business it is to write a series of paragraphs which set forth the good points of the forthcoming loan, and which paragraphs are despatched to the city editor, together with the advertisements, usually late in the afternoon of the day preceding the date of issue of the loan. The prospectus duly appears next morning in the newspapers, and simultaneously in the city article there appear those commendatory notices, either as furnished, or re-written by the city editor or his clerk upon their model. So far, then, the means for creating the conditions of a favourable reception for the loan have been provided. The manipulation of the outside world has been

provided for, and now the manipulations commence inside the Stock Exchange. Two or more "jobbers" who deal in the particular market the loan is connected with—foreign, American, or home—are secretly employed by the "contractors" to bid for the bonds 1 or 1½ premium; that is, £1 or £1 10s. above the price at which the loan is nominally issued—the price, that is, named in the prospectus. The fact of this being done superinduces the belief that these new bonds must be a valuable security, seeing that habitual dealers on the Stock Exchange have already offered more than the government which is responsible for them itself asked for. Outsiders are induced to apply to the contractors for a number of the bonds, in the expectation of securing the premium by afterwards selling at the higher price already quoted in the market. Thus, by the help and with the co-operation of stock brokers and "jobbers," the loan is gradually worked off upon the public; and English investors and capitalists give their hard-won earnings to construct some impracticable railway in the wilds of South America, to feed the cravings of semi-barbarous Oriental monarchs for Western luxuries, or to do something still more wasteful. The vast sums that have been lost in foreign loans of late years show that this is no exaggerated picture, though of course many of their number are perfectly legitimate, and the proceeds may be applied to useful purposes.

The art of loan-mongering has advanced to great perfection, and has almost been raised to the dignity

of a separate profession. This will be illustrated by the fact that as a rule not more than two-thirds of the amounts which the various persons apply for, who are willing to lend their money to the state or corporation in want of help, are what is called "allotted;" that is to say, if they ask for £1,000 of bonds they will only get perhaps £700 or £800; and the impression is thereby produced that the new bonds are in great demand. As the *bonâ fide* subscribers do not get all they asked for on application, they are tempted to employ a broker to buy more for them on the Stock Exchange. There they have to pay the premium; and thus the demand is kept going, and the price is kept up until the contractors have profitably disposed of all the bonds they had undertaken to issue to the public. One of the witnesses examined before the Foreign Loans Commission stated as his opinion that it would be impossible to float a loan in London without the use of the Stock Exchange machinery, because the real English investors, most of whom live in the country, always look to the London market quotations, and are guided by them in deciding what stocks and shares to buy.

It will thus be seen that the Stock Exchange is an essential part of the machinery of credit. It is indispensable as an intermediary for facilitating purchases and sales of existing shares and stocks; and its services are equally necessary in "floating" the shares of new enterprises, or the stocks of new loans sought for by foreign governments. The financial machinery would



be incomplete without it; indeed, it is difficult to conceive how borrowings and lendings to any very large extent could be carried on without the medium of the Stock Exchange. There are, in addition to the London institution, provincial exchanges throughout the country; but these all look to London for guidance; and metropolitan prices regulate prices at the minor establishments.

Having explained the nature of the two leading representative institutions by which the accumulations of capital are stored up or lent out, and by which therefore the double process is performed of collecting the surplus earnings that result from the profitable employment of industry, in order to divert them in reproductive streams into other channels of enterprise, there to fructify and fertilise, we shall have formed some general conception of the province and functions of finance in Financial London and Financial England. It is through the discharge of these important duties that London is the financial centre of the world, for without its banking system, of which the Bank of England is the head, we should not have the head-quarters of international business here, and we could not therefore be the financial centre. And in like manner without the Stock Exchange there would be difficulty in making the stores available for widely diffused use.

Yet financing, on however large a scale, with its twin agents of accumulation and distribution, is rather the efflorescence than the root of true

national prosperity. We can conceive a state which is rich and, in a sense, prosperous through finance alone. We can conceive our own country as an extensively commercial state, having ceased to cultivate agriculture, and being wholly dependent upon other communities for the supply of the wants of her population. It is conceivable that England might in such a state of things be rich and prosperous; but she would not be the England we have known in the past. We have attained to our pre-eminence among the nations because we have cultivated self-dependence, and have secured a population of skilled labourers who have been able to turn out goods of first-class quality. Agriculture and manufactures have gone hand in hand; and by developing the spirit of enterprise we have secured the position we hold in the markets of the world. This is not the place to enter into elaborate arguments as to the claims and merits of varying schools of economists; but we may assume that the pre-eminence England has attained has been chiefly due to the fact that it knew how to take advantage of all openings, and that while our own soil was diligently cultivated, our manufacturers succeeded in making other countries tributary by buying from and selling to them on advantageous conditions. If we were to cease to be a great manufacturing community, if we were to lose our hold on the markets of the world, and were no longer able to supply even our own population with any considerable amount of the luxuries and necessities of life,

we might remain powerful and wealthy as a state, but our power and wealth would rest on a new foundation. We should have become transformed into the mere entrepôt for other countries that had taken our place and outstripped us in manufactures and agriculture. We should be great as bankers, as the international Stock Exchange and bill and bullion centre, and should enjoy the profits derived from these sources ; but we should no longer be the proud leaders of the world's industry. We should be reduced to live in a great degree upon our past accumulations of capital ; and it may be questioned if when our own industry had ceased to be our mainstay, we should long continue to solace ourselves with pleasant prospects of national stability.

Be this as it may, it is as an industrial and commercial state that England has prospered so wonderfully in the past, and that her wealth has accumulated from year to year. We have been a producing community, adding to the sum of the general wealth by enormous masses of manufactured commodities for the supply of the wants of our own population in the first instance, and then to be sent all over the globe for sale or exchange. Through the enterprise of her sons and the industry of her labouring classes England gained, for example, the command of the cotton trade. The products of the looms and spindles of Lancashire have provided fabrics for the inhabitants of India and the East, as well as for those of countries nearer home. By adopting and adapting all improvements in machinery, and by turning out

of our mills and factories articles of good workmanship, we were able to take the lead of other nations. It was the same with regard to iron and steel and the innumerable objects which were made of iron and steel. Sheffield cutlery became famous all the world over just as Lancashire cotton goods did. With our supplies of coal we could manufacture cheaply, and as we had the start of other communities because we had an enterprising and industrial population, we began to accumulate capital in advance of other nations, and the more capital we had at command the greater became our facilities in carrying on those industries, which came to be our staple exports to foreign countries. Circumstances were favourable to Great Britain in many ways. The foundations of her prosperity were laid by the enterprise and skill of her sons and by the industry which these sons were able to direct and employ. Within the last thirty or forty years we have reaped enormous harvests of profit by the adoption of the system of free imports, through which we came to command the resources and industrial products of other nations. The simultaneous vast extension of the means of intercommunication by railways and telegraphs for a time contributed to the further development of our trading activity. The products of our manufactories were passed into all countries ; and all countries to some degree responded by sending us the products they could best turn out. In this way came the mighty commercial growth of the last quarter of a century, which culminated in the excited prosperity of the years

1872, 1873, and 1874. Under the system of free imports England opened her ports to the goods and manufactures of all the world, but unfortunately she has not been able, on the other hand, to secure the abolition of the protectionist duties imposed by foreign nations. As it happened, first the American Union and then the continent of Europe were engrossed with war or the expectation of war, which had the practical effect of a stringent protective system in our favour; for other nations had not the needful time and energy to give to competing with us in industrial efforts while they were fighting the battle of self-existence, or struggling to extend their national power under the promptings of ambition and aggression. Little wonder if with the start we had we were able to make such good use of our opportunities as immensely to extend our commercial preponderance.

The prosperity of England which has enabled her to accumulate vast wealth thus rested on an industrial and commercial basis. Her great financial system has grown out of her commercial resources. We have spoken of our banking system as one of the two most important factors in the financial mechanism which is so delicately organised in Lombard Street. But though this is true in regard to banking as the outcome and the instrument of the complex organisation of credit, without which mercantile transactions on a large scale would be difficult, if not impracticable, banking comes into the field at a much earlier stage than might be inferred if this were its sole function. No

sooner, indeed, does commerce by bringing in profits attain any considerable proportions than bankers are needed to transmit money from place to place, and to keep in safety the balances that are accumulated as the profits of trading, as well as to supply—it may be—the circulating medium which may be used to supplement gold and silver coin. In this aspect of banking, in an earlier phase of commercial society, it is the inter-connecting link between commerce and finance; although in its complete organisation it is the culmination of the matured financial system. The close connection between commerce and banking, and the degree in which they are inter-dependent, is illustrated by the effects produced by a bank failure upon the general community. When a bank stops which has supplied loans to mercantile firms and traders, the withdrawal of the usual facilities that had been afforded by it to its customers tests the stability and resources of the merchants who had been dependent on it; and if serious enough may induce a general loss of confidence and consequent diminution of credit throughout the business community. When this is carried to a certain point we have what is called a panic.

From what has been said regarding England's commercial and financial systems, and the intimate connection there is between them, it will now be intelligible to the reader how both are liable to fluctuations and great changes. Such changes have been already witnessed in this country, and there

are many signs which appear to indicate that we have yet greater before us. We have spoken of the excited prosperity of the years 1872-74, and have shown that it was due to a variety of causes wholly apart from the impetus given to commerce by free trade. Since that period—which is familiarly known as the time of “leaps and bounds” in our material progress—we have had a still more protracted era of depression. The causes of that have also been numerous and various. It is not in England alone that there have been industrial depression, commercial decline, and the gradual curtailment of our purchasing powers as a community. The commercial panics in Vienna and Berlin, and those in the autumn of 1873 in the United States of America, were the premonitions of what was coming, and about to involve nearly all nations in severe suffering. It is not surprising in view of this lapse of commercial and trading energy, leading to a final decay of enterprise, and the loss on the part of the general population of the resources out of which they were able to purchase the luxuries and necessities of life, that the question has been raised on the Continent whether that from which we are suffering is a “definitive crisis,” or only one of the series of periodical alternations which illustrate the law of action and reaction, or ebb and flow, so that we are now passing through the time of rebound from a period of over-inflation. It would take us too long to discuss this problem. For ourselves, we see no reason for regarding the mercantile

deadness of the present time as different in nature from that of the usual periods of reaction that follow inordinate confidence and over-development as surely as the night the day. The grounds relied upon to prove the opposite are unsubstantial. Why should it be supposed that all the world has at this precise year of grace come to the "end of its tether" in regard to the development of its industrial resources? It is true that railways and telegraphs have been everywhere multiplied, and that English money has been used in taking to remote parts the machinery of civilisation—in the construction of roads and canals, the introduction of gas into towns, and the formation of mighty systems of water-supply for large populations. It is also true that it has been in consequence of the [number of these industrial works all over the globe that wealth has multiplied with the amazing rapidity witnessed during the last quarter of a century. We have sent money to foreign countries for employment in these and other ways, and have received in return immense imports of goods and products of every clime, which have stimulated trade. It may be a question whether England has not done this too extensively for her means; whether her enterprise has not been stimulated to precipitate and excessive developments. There are reasoners among us who assert that this has been so, and they support their averment by pointing to the growth in the excess in the value of the goods and industrial products that are imported from



other countries into England over the value of the goods, and native products that have been exported from England to all the rest of the world. The figures which are published every month by the Board of Trade furnish an index by which we may know how things commercial are going with us. In former years we used to export more than we imported; and therefore we received from other countries, in return for the manufactures and goods we sent to them, more than we gave away. There was thus a margin of profit on the whole mass of our foreign trade; and for a long time economists looked upon the amount of the profit thus received as the surest test of national prosperity. As, however, our population and our wealth grew our wants increased, and within recent years we have bought so much from other countries in necessaries and luxuries that the exports of all our manufacturing products have not sufficed to pay for them, and the "balance of trade," as it is called, has accordingly been thrown against us. Instead of being considered a bad sign, as would have been the case long ago, a new school of economists has arisen, who tell us it is the best sign of our wealth; that we import thus, enormously beyond what we export, because we have such a large accumulated capital; and this capital, they say, has been increasing yearly by gigantic strides to the extent of hundreds of millions. It is, no doubt, quite true that a country cannot, any more than an individual, go on buying goods beyond what it can pay for. It may

do so for a time on credit, but ruin must be the result if too long persisted in. The excess of English imports of articles of merchandise over exports is at once a proof of English wealth and of the indebtedness of foreign countries to Great Britain. But, at the same time, it is evident that that wealth is not an inexhaustible quantity, and if the excess goes on continuously increasing there must be danger of exhaustion, unless we are able to multiply our capital even quicker than we are spending it.

We do not wish to encumber our pages with figures, but to illustrate our precise mercantile position we may give here the amount of the excess of our imports over our exports, and show how it has been growing recently. In order to get at the true figures we must make allowance for various disturbing elements that require us to alter very considerably the gross amounts stated in the Board of Trade returns. For example, there are the differences between what is called the "declared value" or the estimated worth of our exports and imports, and their actual selling prices after freights and transport charges and all other expenses, with fair margins for profits, are allowed for. We must also remember that the mere enumeration of quantities and values will give only an approximate idea as to the national progress or decline. Excess in exports over imports may be satisfactory when the result is a remittance home in cash or an addition to our investments in property or loans held abroad. On the other hand, excess of imports is satisfactory when it is

the result of the receipt of goods of greater value than those sent out, or when it is paid for by income accruing to the importing country from investments sent abroad. Bearing these facts and views in mind, the following may be relied upon as an approximation to the amounts of the adverse balances of trade which England has had to provide for :—

1871	...	£15,000,000	1873	...	£19,000,000
1870	...	34,000,000	1874	..	29,000,000
1869	...	30,000,000	1875	...	54,000,000
1868	...	37,000,000	1876	...	83,000,000
1867	...	27,000,000	1877	...	100,000,000
1866	...	36,000,000	1878	say	100,000,000

The nominal balances against us have been a great deal more; and these estimates do not certainly err in making the figures unduly small.

It will be seen that of late years the adverse balances have made great strides, so we need not be surprised that grave anxiety has been excited. It is certain that a part of the debt we have thus incurred has been met by an export from this country of bonds of indebtedness from other countries held here. This may not prove that our wealth as a nation is declining; it may mean that the money which the bonds represent is being employed in a different way, although still in investments, but that is only an hypothesis, and if true at all is only so to a partial extent. The fair conclusion is that we have had to part with these bonds because we had to pay away so much more money than we could provide for out of profits and out of the returns from our investments. We have, in

fact, been living to some extent upon our capital. If we look closely at the figures we have given we shall find some important lessons taught by them which are by no means wholly reassuring. It will be seen that there was a balance against us of from thirty to forty millions—roughly speaking—each year during the period starting from the year of the banking panic in 1866 on to 1870. In 1871 that balance was reduced as low as £15,000,000, and in 1872 it was wiped out altogether. In 1873 it was only £19,000,000, and in 1874 it was £29,000,000; but it has multiplied with such rapidity since, that three years afterwards it was nearly four times the latter amount. Now the years in which the adverse trading balance was uniformly low were those in which this country enjoyed the greatest trading prosperity it has ever known. A change set in in 1874, and from that time till now we have been going from bad to worse until trade profits have almost disappeared, and we are passing through a testing time of great severity. Yet the time in which we are most seriously depressed is the time in which we have had to pay enormously more to other countries than we ever did before. Even the vast accumulations of English wealth cannot stand for an indefinite time the tremendous drafts represented by adverse trade balances of hundreds of millions sterling. If it could be proved that we are still meeting these drafts out of the interest on our capital, it is yet plain that we must have ceased to be accumulating fresh capital. The export of foreign bonds already alluded

to, however, is in all likelihood a direct drain upon capital.

Matters have thus been brought to this crisis: that with our growing tastes for luxuries as a people, and the enormous additions to our national expenditure in consequence, we have come to occupy a position in which we are no longer progressing, but rather appear to be standing still, if we are not even falling back. And at this precise time it is that we find other nations able to compete with us to an extent such as we have never before experienced. It does not need resort, therefore, to any theories of "definitive crises," such as are bruited abroad on the Continent, to show that things are in a critical way with us. The progress of the human race would not be arrested even if English progress were. There are other great industrial works to be done in addition to the railways, telegraphs, canals, and important public enterprises that have been constructed during the past quarter of a century. A new world is opening in the east, and America in the west has an almost boundless future of expansion and development. Continued stagnation in trade would bring universal paralysis, and that is death; but partial stagnation often clears the way for a new departure. Besides the new countries that are being opened up as a field for the employment of capital, there are also signs of the multiplication of new and vast scientific forces, such as the electric light, for instance, which will probably lead to an immense development of enterprise. The depression which

we have seen to exist is the natural rebound from over-activity, and it has continued till all spring and elasticity seem to have gone out of our trade. It has been deepened and intensified by numerous other agencies and causes—the losses to individuals through foreign defaults, the reaction upon England of the severe depression that has been felt in the United States ever since the panic in 1873, recent political troubles, the depreciation of silver, and the consequent disorganisation of our Eastern trade, the famines in India, the lock-up of capital to excess in machinery and other means of production. It needs no theory of physical causation, such as the spot in the sun, on which Professor Jevons has been bestowing anxious thought, to account for the long drawn out crisis through which we have been passing.

The question which is of primary importance, however, is whether over and above these more or less transitory causes there are signs of a permanent loss of trade. It is certain there will be no permanent stoppage of the demand for the goods which England has hitherto supplied. So far as our own population are concerned, they have of late years attained to a higher level of average comfort than formerly; but who will say that even yet they are clothed as they ought to be? Were the times brisk and wages high, their demands for cotton goods must increase; and it would be well for themselves as well as for the trade of the country if they would spend more of their earnings in this way and less at the public-house. Temperance

enthusiasts exaggerate when they attribute the depression of trade to the drinking habits of our population; but it cannot be doubted that if half the money that is wasted on drink were spent upon the comforts of life, a lasting impetus would be given to trade. As it is, there is little reason to fear the extinction of the demand, and our own home markets will always furnish our manufacturers with the means of disposing of a portion of their goods. But it is much harder to say whether England is likely to continue to supply the demands not merely of her own population, but of the inhabitants of foreign countries, in the same large proportions as formerly. Although the alarm professed in some quarters is unwarranted, seeing that nearly the whole decrease in exports shown by the Board of Trade returns is accounted for by the fall in values, the quantities remaining nearly the same, yet in many branches of manufactures in which we could fairly claim the supremacy not long ago, we have now to fight against competitors who run us hard in the race. The United States, steadied and made careful by recent suffering, are increasing their exports largely, and have lately turned an adverse trade balance into a favourable one. We must expect, as capital increases in America, that more of it will go into machinery, and that thus we shall have powerful rivals in our American friends. If cotton mills were established in the Southern States, near where the cotton is grown, the Americans would be able to manufacture more cheaply than we can. Already, indeed, the

vast Mississippi valley, which used to be wholly agricultural, is studded over with manufactories. It is the same in India, where cotton-spinning has assumed large proportions; and England is being beaten by her own dependencies. It is in great degree the fault of our own people that this is the case. Our manufacturers and merchants, or rather perhaps our manufacturers tempted by merchants and brokers, many of whom are aliens and interlopers, under the stimulus of competition, and greedy of profits, have carried adulteration to a terrible extreme. Their cotton goods have been adulterated with China clay in many cases to the extent of two hundred per cent. It is for this reason more than anything else that we are losing command over the Indian and Chinese markets. The natives of Eastern climes are shrewd enough to know and value good materials, and having found the cloth they bought from English makers turn out badly, they resort to other traders. It is doubtful if we shall ever recover the supremacy we have thus lost in the Eastern markets, and we have ourselves for the most part to blame. It is the righteous punishment of those who have revelled in "cheap and nasty" goods.

But though England may not resume the sceptre of an autocrat in trade, it will be wholly her own fault if she ceases to be one of the large producers of the world. What threatens to wrest the reins from her hands is not so much foreign competition, or the want of reciprocity, as the practice of adulteration, and the high price of English labour as compared with foreign. Our



work-people must either submit to further reductions in their wages or to longer hours of work, or to a further expenditure of effort which will ensure a better quality of work during the present hours. Unless adulteration is stopped, however, nothing will save English foreign trade from ruin; for people will cease to buy from us when they find they can no longer depend upon the quality. We must in any case expect to have to face greater competition in the future than we have had in the past, now that we have so many rivals in the field; but if England be only true to herself, and her traders practise the virtues which once distinguished them, no one is likely to take her pre-eminence from her. She may not sit as queen among the nations, but she may always at least be *prima inter pares*. Times of depression will pass away; trade will resume its activity, and prosperous times will be again seen. These days will not come, however—or, if they do they will not abide—unless our traders abandon the ways of trickery and deceit, and learn the virtues which distinguished their forefathers in the proud days in which English mercantile honour was unstained, and when the name of English goods was a synonym for excellence.

## CHAPTER IX.

### COMMERCIAL ADMINISTRATION.

General Principles of Business Administration—Typical Instances selected:  
(1) Cotton Trade, (2) Iron Trade, (3) A Banking House—Gradation of Responsibility in the Management of Cotton Mills—Different Responsible Officials and their Several Provinces—The Managing Partner—Yorkshire Iron Works—Organisation traced from Pit's Mouth to Sale of the Article—Business of a great Banking House in London described—Functions of the Separate Partners—Capital employed, Political Influences, and General Principles to be observed in the Management of each of these Businesses.

It may be said of every great business, that it is a microcosm of our civil polity and the embodiment of principles which are recognised in the conduct of the highest departments of State. It has been shown in a previous chapter that the possessions of the territorial nobility require in their management not a few of those qualities displayed in imperial administration. The conduct of the great commercial concerns of England involves the same centralisation of authority, delegated by regular gradations throughout the whole system. The cotton and iron trades of Lancashire and Yorkshire, and the chief banking houses of the city of London afford the best instances of the organisation of that private enterprise which is the mainspring of English commerce.

We will select our first illustration from the large cotton industries of the north. The unbaled cotton, already mixed so as to secure uniformity in quality,

passes through a series of machines, leaving the first in the form of a fleece and the second in rope-like coils, until it is thoroughly cleaned and carded, or combed into rudimentary threads of an even thickness. In this form it is twisted by the roving machines and throstles and wound on bobbins (or reels) in its finished state as yarn; and as such, is moved to the weaving shed, where it is woven into the finished material. The whole process is done by machinery; for in the shed the threads are arranged in warps, dressed with size, the loom is worked, the shuttle thrown, the warp unwound, and the finished cloth wound on the roller ready for the warehouse, by steam-power. Except in the removal of the material from one machine to the other, the intervention of man is restricted to supervision, to the control of the speed of the machine, to an unceasing watchfulness to arrest it, when any hitch threatens damage, and to the removal of the obstruction.

With this supervision the responsibility commences. An individual minder or weaver controls a certain number of hands, and is accountable to the overlooker for the work turned out by so many mules in the one case, or by so many looms in the other. Of these overlookers there is one to each room, who, again, is responsible to the foreman of the spinning or of the weaving department for the material delivered from his room, the foreman himself being accountable to the factory manager. The woven material, or cloth, when removed from the looms to the warehouse, is

inspected, and imperfect lots are rejected. This is the duty of the warehouseman, who, too, will have already examined the cotton on its arrival at the mill; the bales (the original packages shipped at New Orleans or Charleston) have been opened, compared with sample, carefully examined throughout, all inferior cotton, all stones and the like, being separated by the women or young men employed under him. To his care, also, falls the due delivery of the finished material to the canal or railway which takes it to the warehouse in Manchester. Steam-power is under the control of a foreman engineer, accountable for the true working and repair of the machinery, for the supply of coal, for the lighting of the factory where gas is made on the premises, and for the conduct of the engineers and gasmen under him. The warehousemen and engineer, like the foremen, are directly under the factory manager, as are the watchman and the timekeeper; the former looking to the safety of the buildings, the latter to the due attendance of the hands.

Here, so far as the actual production is concerned, ends the organisation. If we follow the cloth to Manchester, we find a manager at the warehouse, who sees to the delivery of the goods if to order; or sells them if made for stock. It is his duty to look to the prices obtained, the orders he takes and their due transmission to the mill, the collection of accounts, and the duties respectively performed by the salesmen, clerks, and porters under him. But the counting-house at the mill is under a separate head, responsible for the

book-keeping, the rendering of accounts, the due collection of money, the correct disbursements in purchases and for wages, as well as for the efficiency of his staff.

The chiefs of the three departments of manufacture and sale—the factory manager and the heads of the Manchester warehouse and of the counting-house—are in their turn severally responsible to the managing partner, the supreme controller. But the purchase of the raw material is so important a point, involving as it does two-thirds of the whole expenditure, that it is very rarely entrusted to a subordinate. It is one of the special occupations of the managing partner, who visits Liverpool on market-days or, as occasion may require, goes round with his broker, and buys such cotton as in quality, quantity, and price may suit him. The cotton itself has been picked on the plantations of South Carolina, baled, and sent down to the seaport, whence it is shipped to Liverpool, either purchased by, or consigned to, the merchant at that place,—the merchant landing, warehousing it, and placing samples in the hands of his broker, where it is seen by the buyer, in the manner already described. Occasionally these intermediaries are dispensed with; an order for a certain quality of cotton being given by the manufacturer directly to the merchant at Liverpool or Charleston. But although in this case the expenses of brokerage and of the Liverpool warehouse are saved—no inconsiderable items where everything is calculated to a nicety—this is not the rule. Such a transaction is legitimately the trade of the merchant.

It will thus be seen that the managing partner is the pivot on which the organisation turns. All the departments are reviewed by him. He settles all disputes, and specially sees that all transactions are carried out with the scrupulous fairness that has made the reputation of the house. He decides the proportion of each particular "make" of cloth which the factory shall turn out, and instructs the salesman as to prices and credits. He in his turn consults his partners as to a common view of the future course of the markets, as to the advisability of restricting or extending sales of cloth on the one hand, or of purchases of cotton on the other, and as to the credit given to large customers. Such is the system of central organisation characteristic of the wealthy partnerships in the cotton trade. The cases in which the managing partner is relieved of a portion of his responsibilities occur most frequently when the supervision of the counting-house and Manchester business is undertaken by some other member of the firm.

The aspect of one of the great ironworks of Yorkshire is very different. The barren treeless waste, the lurid fires of the everlasting furnace, the overhanging bank of smoke, the begrimed appearance of the inhabitants, the railroad running into the works with coal and iron-laden trucks moving to and fro—these mark the neighbourhood. Within are seen the numerous calcining ovens and conical blast-furnaces, the puddling furnaces and rolling-mills with the great steam hammer, vast stacks of coal, of coke, and of

fire-bricks, the foundry with its chimney, and the open spaces where lie the products of mill and furnace. But the premises are not, as in a cotton manufactory, self-contained. In adjacent parts of the country are situated the coal-mines, the ironstone pits, the limestone quarries, which, the property of the concern, produce almost everything required in the process of manufacture, the chief exception being the fire-bricks, usually obtained from Staffordshire.

The organisation commences at the seats of production, the mines, pits, and quarries, each of which is presided over by a responsible head. In the former, a manager controls his subordinates and the miners, sees that the wages are duly paid, that production is on a fair scale, that the coal is turned into coke in the ovens at the pit's mouth in such quantity as may be required, and that both coal and coke are sent off as wanted. His duties are, in fact, those of any other coal-mine manager ; and in the same way, the foreman at the ironstone pits, and the foreman at the limestone quarries, are responsible for the work done by the miners and quarrymen respectively. The transport of the material to the works and of the manufactured iron for delivery, by means of the short lines of railway which are owned by the concern, is a matter important enough to require the special supervision of a traffic manager. The locomotives and rolling-stock, the engineers and firemen, again, are the separate charge of a chief engineer, to whom also falls the superintendence of the extensive machinery used for the blast-furnaces and rolling-mills.

The processes of manufacture at the works are ordinarily entrusted to two distinct managers, whose general supervision in their respective departments includes care that coal, coke, and material are supplied as wanted, prevention of waste, the regulation of the order of work, and the delivery of the goods according to contract, in proper time, and of the specified quality. The one restricts his attention to the production of pig-iron, having under him a foreman directly responsible for the work done by the hands employed at the ovens, where the ironstone goes through the first process, that of being calcined with coal, and at the blast-furnaces, in which, with a due proportion of coke and limestone, the calcined ore is smelted and run into pigs. This "pig-iron" is sold as such, or converted into manufactured iron in one of its two forms—malleable or cast. These latter processes involve, as has been said, a separate department, distinctly under the charge of another manager. Under the latter are two foremen. The first of these is responsible for the out-turn of the puddling furnaces, steam hammer, and rolling-mills, by means of which the iron is made malleable, and manufactured into rails, ship and boiler-plates, bars, angle and T iron. His duties are not light, because in the first operation he has to do with the puddlers, the most independent of workmen. For a puddler must not only be skilled in his work, but have exceptional powers of endurance; and he knows his value. He works or not, and for a longer or for a shorter time, at his own caprice, and when work presses, the humouring of these



lusty sons of toil is not the least difficult of the foreman's duties. It may perhaps be here explained that the puddler, having first "fettled" his furnace, puts in a charge of pig-iron, and works, or "puddles," it in a molten state into a ball, which is taken to the steam-hammer, and from it, as "a bloom," is rolled by the mills into bars, when it is cut up, re-heated, and again rolled into the marketable forms enumerated above. A second foreman has the control of the foundry, of the smiths and their assistants, of the forges for the casting of railway-chairs, and various other parts of machinery.

The watchman and the timekeeper will be directly under the managers, who, again, with the other head men (the managers of the mines, pits, and quarries, the engineer and the traffic manager), are responsible to the chief director or managing partner, to whose authority also, as in other manufacturing concerns, the head of the counting-house at the works, entrusted with the care of the accounts, is subject. The sale of the goods in London comes within the province of the London representative of the house, who has a staff under his control, charged with the supervision of the delivery and shipment of the iron, and with the collection of accounts. But the London manager, as well as the agents employed for similar purposes at the outposts (Liverpool, Hull, and other places), as a rule take all their orders from the managing partner, the intercourse often—in the case of the agents almost invariably—being carried on by correspondence.

It will be seen that here, as in a cotton mill, it is

usual to place the control in the hands of one man, who has a practical knowledge of every department. To him fall the decision of the proportion of each kind of iron to be made, the instructions as to sales, and the entire supervision. He consults with his partners as to the general line of business and probable course of the markets, and is sometimes assisted in one or other special department, or replaced in his absence, by one of them. But, as a rule, he has less need of such aid than the director of any other equally important business ; because in a wealthy ironworks establishment the area of production is its own, and, its manufacture being usually sold for cash on delivery, the necessity of financial combinations is of rare occurrence.

Much more tranquil, and presenting in its serene exterior a marked contrast to the bustle and agitation which pervade these centres of manufacturing industry, is the scene that we may next visit. Quitting one of the busiest thoroughfares of the busiest city of the world, we turn through the corridor into a house that, in years gone by, has been the dwelling of one of our merchant princes, but now is used only in the daytime as the office of his successors. The quiet and order of the great room first entered, with its thirty or forty clerks separated from the public by a long mahogany counter and plate-glass screens, gives a pleasant relief to the nerves wearied by the turmoil outside. In both the previous cases the material employed and the process of manufacture are visible enough. But here, the centre whence radiates an even

larger business than either of the others, the machinery is restricted apparently to pens, ink, and paper. It is, in fact, a directing centre self-contained, and this principle is carried from the highest to the lowest. For in the City, the business of the present day is so subdivided—the railway and dock companies filling the offices of carriers and warehousemen, the brokers and shipping agents attending to the produce dealt in and its disposal—that in the merchant's office itself there is hardly any sign of the nature of the special trade of the firm.

Here, as in the other concerns, there are frequently partners who visit the office, have their private rooms, interest themselves in special departments, and are periodically consulted. For the most part, however, they delegate their responsibility. As a consequence of the more varied nature of the business, the delegation is not, in this instance, entirely left to one person. There is a working or managing partner of capabilities and experience, such as are demanded in the other administrations, on whom devolves, practically, the general control; but one department, the finance, is distinctly the charge of a single partner gifted with a special aptitude. In wealthy manufacturing concerns, finance, properly so-called, is not known. The premises belong to the manufacturers themselves, who have ample working capital, and seldom are confronted by a more imperious necessity than that of a temporary overdraft from the banker on emergency. But in a merchant's business, however large the capital, there are

occasions when transactions are entered into involving amounts of much greater magnitude. In fact, a firm that would limit its operations strictly within the amount of its capital would not be availing itself of its legitimate opportunities. Now, as it is a principle with the largest and wealthiest houses never to obtain advances on their produce, and on the other hand, always to keep a round balance with their bankers and a large sum at call with one of the great discount houses, it is clear that some special financial ability is required to provide for the engagements of the future, so that this position of unassailable solidity may be at all times maintained. This is the duty of the partner indicated, who has directly under him the head cashier. The latter, presiding over the cash department, is responsible for the correctness of the acceptances and cheques which the partner signs, for the due payment into the bank of all incomings, for disbursements of all kinds, and specially, a correct list of the acceptances of the firm for giving into the bankers from time to time.

Another distinctive feature of a merchant's business is, that all letters and documents must be signed, and all important visitors seen, by a partner. As the managing partner is frequently out and occasionally absent, it follows that it is as a rule arranged that one or other of the less active members of the firm shall be present to act in these capacities if required. But with these exceptions, the centralisation of authority is the same as in other great business establishments. Besides the duties enumerated, the managing partner has to review

all business, to read all letters before they go the round of the departments, to see the more important customers, and to consult with the other partners on all special occasions. Responsible to him for their several departments are the following head clerks:—The head of the office, who takes charge of the general correspondence and all matters that do not refer to a special department, having under him also the clerks entrusted with the postal and telegraph services. Directly answerable to him, too, are such subordinates as the messengers, porter, and housekeeper. Then there is the chief of the shipping department, accountable for all charters made, and for all matters connected with freighting. In the produce department, again, another expert superintends the sale and due delivery of all produce consigned to the house, though acting to a certain extent under the immediate control of the managing partner, who as a rule treats immediately with the brokers. For the convenience of communication with the controlling head, these departments are not unfrequently together in the one large room or general office; but separate rooms are generally allotted to the book-keepers, the order office, and the insurance department. At the head of the first is the chief book-keeper, responsible for the correct keeping of the books and rendering of accounts by the numerous staff under him. The head of the order department has charge of the due execution and shipment of all orders received by the firm, whether it be an order for a railroad or for a case of wine, referring in only the more important

transactions to the chief. And lastly, the head of the insurance department is entrusted with the important duty of seeing that all goods and produce, at sea or in warehouse, are fully covered in the one case by marine, in the other by fire insurance. In each of the departments there are numerous clerks answerable to their respective chiefs; and it only remains to be said that the latter are men specially qualified to secure the discharge of the different services in the best and least expensive fashion. It is in the selection of fit men for these posts that the administrative ability of the responsible head of all is proved.

This then is the organisation of a banking house. It will have been observed that these firms have their special bankers, and it will be expedient here to explain the difference existing between the two classes of business—a banking house and a bank. Bankers proper carry on a trade which is often larger in amount and is made up of more numerous transactions, but which knows nothing of the complex operations familiar to the former. A banker mainly receives money on deposit to lend it out on sufficient security, making his profit from the difference of interest paid and received. The largest London merchants entitle themselves banking houses, because their business, although distinctly embracing that of a merchant, chiefly consists in finding the means for the trade of other merchants, having houses either in the colonies or in foreign countries, with remuneration by commission and not by results. Of the nature of their dealings a fair notion

has been given, and, it may be added, their business connection is always carefully selected and exceptionally well treated. For in great crises, when the value of produce threatens to fall below that of the advance made upon it, such a firm will not sacrifice its customers to save itself, but will hold the depreciated article for a recovery with a foresight doing credit alike to its honour and courage.

The term *millionnaire* might, without some explanation, give a false impression as to the amount of capital embarked in the larger industries. It is a rare occurrence—such instances might, in fact, be enumerated in a few lines—when an individual partner has so much as one million sterling invested in his business. But applied to the richer partners in wealthy concerns, the title is not a misnomer, for these will have considerable property, in land and personalty, in other directions. In truth, manufacturing limits by its very nature the amount of money that can be usefully employed. Thus in a cotton factory it may be said that a capital of £500,000 actually invested in buildings, plant, and current business, would represent one of the very largest concerns, and in an ironworks establishment, double this sum. In the former trade, this limit is seldom exceeded; in the latter there are one or two cases in which the capital is greater. The simplest way of giving a notion of the magnitude of the dealings of such firms will be to remark that the capital invested is turned over not less than twice in the year: this would represent a minimum average daily

expenditure for material and wages of over £3,000 in the one case, and of over £6,000 in the other, and of receipts of like amounts. And it may be added that a return of  $7\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. on the total capital, or of £37,500 and £75,000 respectively, would represent the amount which in ordinary times would be annually divisible amongst the partners. It is more difficult to estimate the resources of a representative banking house, because the opportunities which offer of large operations hardly impose a limit on the amount that can from time to time be made use of. The percentage of profits, too, has a wider range from year to year. In one or two cases, the means employed are exceptionally large. Apart from these, a house with a working capital of two millions would stand in quite the front rank; and as this capital is turned over more frequently, if at smaller profits than in manufacturing, and as the transactions are not confined to cash, advances being frequently made by acceptances, it will readily be perceived that the average daily volume of business of such a firm will amount to a more than considerable sum.

A second notable peculiarity is, that although there may be many partners, yet, as a rule, the practical management of a large concern is left to one managing partner responsible to the others for what is done, and who is not only a man of proved capacity, but one thoroughly acquainted with the working of each and every department. The exception is, as has been shown, in a merchant's business where finance is required. There are instances where the different



partners take each his special department and its responsibility. In many concerns, too, there is a senior partner whose stake is the largest, and whose right of veto is almost absolute. But, generally speaking, the partners, though present when they like, and consulted on all important occasions as well as on the general lines of business, and probably interesting themselves in one or other department, do not interfere with the working of the business. The veto and the right to interfere are not surrendered, but are held in abeyance so long as it seems that, in the interests of all, the directing control should be in the hands of one, and of the ablest.

There are, necessarily, questions which will arise that cannot be dealt with except by a consensus of opinion. National movements, as they may affect the general interest, specially fall within this category. Whatever may be the bias of the individual members of a firm, all can keenly appreciate, not only fiscal measures, but the general policy of a ministry as affecting peace or war. Although war may temporarily benefit this or the other industry, yet a more lasting and necessary element of prosperity is that security which alone guarantees a proper outlet for the whole trade of the country; for depression in one trade will inevitably, sooner or later, re-act on the others. Manufacturers have, in particular, to watch with jealous care the proceedings of their Continental rivals, so as to keep pace with them in all improvements; and the spinner has specially to look to the state and prospects of trade

in the United States. But the merchant, it may be said, must have steadily in view the position of affairs in all parts of the globe. Disturbances in the colonies or at home, anticipations of Continental warfare, a quarrel with the distant Chinese, revolutions in South America:—all these things mean to him limited trade, lower prices, distrust and loss. He must also have an exceptional power to gauge the movements of the money market, so as not to be led to mistake a warning that indicates temporary disaster for one which is the herald of that most terrible of mercantile evils, a crisis, with its attendant perils, not only of heavy losses, but of absolute collapse to even the strongest houses, if their ramifications are too wide.

Another special aspect of the matter is the advantage possessed by the largest concerns over their smaller rivals. This is an important element of their success. Their means and the amount of their dealings give them the command of markets, whilst their old established connection and repute for fair dealing secure them the best customers. The proportion of their incidental expenses, and especially of the withdrawals of the partners, to the amount of business done, is much less, and this tends to rapid accumulations. And lastly, they are not forced to sell their goods, and so to accept purchasers of doubtful solidity. They have thus immunity from bad debts, and from that dire necessity to make ends meet which often in smaller concerns takes up time urgently required in other directions.

In leaving the subject of the administration of the representative businesses of the country, it is perhaps well to say that the systems which superficially would appear to be severally the outcome of a master mind, are not so in reality. They have grown piecemeal from small beginnings to the completed structure. The organisation which turns out millions of pounds of cotton in perfect cloth, or from tons of coal and ore produces our iron roads, or constructs a railway or a dry-dock in a foreign country, has been built up bit by bit, as occasion has seemed to demand.

## CHAPTER X.

### THE WORKING CLASSES.

Numbers and Influence of English Working Men—Great Variety of the Working Classes and Happy Results of the Variety—Attitude of the Working Classes towards the State—Difference between French and English Working Men in Congress—Principles on which the State in England interferes between Employer and Employed—Factory Legislation—General Working of Factory Acts, and the Evils which they have prevented—Relative Powers of Factory Acts and Education Acts—Educational Reforms still wanted in Manufacturing Districts—Social and Industrial Reforms yet wanted—The Truck System not entirely removed by Legislation—State of the Working Classes in the Black Country—Mining England: its General Characteristics and Varieties—Special Types of Miners and Features of Mining—Relations between Employers and Employed—The Good Side of Trades Unions—Arbitration and Conciliation—Working Men in Parliament—Differences between the Working Classes in London and the Provinces.

ENGLAND, which has been called the nation of shopkeepers, might with equal truth be described as the empire of working men. They bear a larger numerical proportion to the rest of the population in England than in any other European country; they have more freedom; they exercise more direct political influence. They comprise about half the inhabitants of Great Britain south of the Tweed, and may be estimated at a total of from fifteen to seventeen millions. There is hardly a city in the realm which, if they were resolutely minded to do so, they could not turn into a state of siege. A well-concerted rising on their part in any of the great centres of manufacture and commerce would not merely terrorise a district, but paralyse the trading system of

the empire. As they are the ultimate depositories of physical, so are they also of political power. The parliamentary suffrage has been carried into the squalid alleys and the mean courts of our large towns—the abode of the compound householder and the lodger voter. It cannot be long before the humblest cottagers in agricultural England will enjoy the same privilege, or claim successfully the same right. Yet absolutely supreme as, in the last instance, the working men of England are in the government of England, our rulers, and the ruling classes generally, do not recognise in that supremacy the source either of political or social peril. We have agitators and firebrands about us who talk of a trembling constitution and a tottering dynasty. But we think we have reason to know that wild words like these awake no responsive echo of insurrectionary enthusiasm in the breast of the great majority of that audience to which they are addressed. We believe in the stability of the régime under which we live. In other words, we have faith in the good sense, the good feeling, and the political docility of the English working man.

How is it that we have in England so well grounded a confidence in the orderly conduct of that preponderating element in our population which is the cause of alarm, danger, and restrictive legislation abroad? One answer is to be found in the very fact which makes a comprehensive survey of the English working classes, in anything like a limited space, almost impossible. There is as much variety of opinion and of ambition

among the working classes in England as among those above them. They include as many sections and schools, differences as wide, and divisions as deep, as the upper classes, or as that complex multitude known as the middle classes. It is therefore impossible to label them with any single epithet or any one characteristic, unless, indeed, it should be said that they are law-abiding. This diversity of thought, belief, and aim amongst the toilers of England is at once the consequence and the cause of exceptional national advantages. It results mainly from the absolute and unfettered freedom of opinion and speech which is enjoyed in this country. The right of public meetings and demonstrations is established. We have a press which may even verge on licence with impunity. No attempt is made to check free discussion and conversation on the part of working men who assemble together in club-rooms or at lectures. There are associations of working men who take their stand upon the "true principles of democracy," and who decline publicly, or in the printed declaration of their political faith, to pledge their adherence to the existing constitution in Church or State. They aim at "self-government in the fullest sense of the term," in other words, at universal adult suffrage, and they propose to consider "any system of representation upon a narrower basis to be nothing less than disguised despotism." Since "virtue and capacity, not wealth or birth, are to be recognised as the essential attributes of the legislative body," it follows that "all hereditary

privileges are to be abolished.”\* After the enunciation of points of the new charter so drastic and uncompromising as these, it will surprise no one to be told that there are included in the programme such demands of minor revolutionary import as the shorter duration of Parliaments; payment of members of Parliament from the Imperial taxation, and of election expenses from local taxation; complete separation of Church and State; compulsory secular and free education. Such a propaganda as this may sound appalling, but is really harmless. Its promoters may speak daggers, but they use and desire to use none. The association itself which is committed to such principles is social more than political, and belongs to an order of institution which, as we shall a little later see, is a source of unmixed good to the working classes themselves—the working man’s club. The simple truth is, that the rather full-flavoured prospectus acts as one of the many constitutional safety-valves with which this favoured country is provided. In a land of civil liberty, in which political discontent seldom advances beyond the negative stage, or when it assumes a positive form, and is not without some justification in fact, immediately commands the attention and the action of the Legislature, words can have no alarming sound for the powers that be. They are the mere exhibition of transient humours, or, at worst, exaggerations and caricatures of fitful phases of the popular mind.

\* These words are taken from the prospectus of the Eleusis Club, Chelsea —a fairly representative and well-managed institution.

As this variety of feeling among the English working classes is the result of a state of things under which free play is allowed to every mind and to every tongue, so is one of our chief guarantees against domestic troubles, and democratic discontent, to be found in its effects. To coerce the multitude is too often to consolidate sedition. Englishmen are law-abiding, because they are persuaded that it is the honest intention of the law to be fair to all alike, and because they believe that in the long run the Legislature does not neglect their true interests. If this belief did not exist the spirit abroad would be that, not of reverence, but resistance to the law, and there would be a real danger lest the working classes should organise themselves into a compact mass of antagonism to the existing state of things. Once destroy this infinite complexity of thought and feeling, and a real step will have been taken towards uniting these heterogeneous groups and loosely coherent sections into one solid mass, which may form a serious menace to the institutions of the State.

As English workmen differ in their opinions, so do they in their worth. There is the honest toiler, who has his machine ready to begin work on the first beat of the engine, and the saunterer who, as Mr. John Morley in speaking of Lancashire puts it, "watches the minutes like a lazy schoolboy." The best type of artisan in a mill is as good as the best type of active humanity anywhere else, and the best type abounds. The fact is that the British working man,



however energetically the attempt may be made to lash him up into revolutionary fervour, cannot divest himself of the conservative instincts of his race. He may be liberal, or radical, or even democratic; but so long as the shoe does not pinch he has no wish to change it for another that perhaps will. This rough estimate of the English *ouvrier* must be accompanied—there are certain preachers of the industrial revolution who would say corrected—by reference to particular traits. Both his vices and his virtues have been unnecessarily and unwarrantably looked at through a magnifying glass. He is no more uniformly sober than he is uniformly drunken. He is no more exclusively the creature of club life—important though the club be as a factor in his civilisation—than he is of pot-house life. The public-house continues to be the house of call for a too large percentage of his order, and the publican's pocket the bottomless pit into which an undue proportion of his wages finds its way. A socially and morally perfect and faultless working man is as impossible as the irredeemably vicious baronet in novels, or the spotlessly angelic child in nursery story-books.

There is much on which we may congratulate ourselves in the conceptions which the working man entertains of the functions of the State, and, in a general way, of the position of its governors. He may call himself a democrat, but he is in practice a very good subject of the monarchy. He may profess belief in the perfectibility of mankind as a consequence of the

establishment of a republican form of government, but he has not the slightest wish to do violence to the tenure of the Crown. There are, indeed, two things that have become customary among us of which he does not approve, which it may be even said he does not understand. He declines to admit that the re-settlement of the financial relations between the people and the Crown, which was made at the commencement of the present reign, justifies the grants that are voted by Parliament to members of the royal family on such occasions as marriage. He will, indeed, admit that this is preferable to the periodic demands which were formerly presented to, and conceded by, Parliament for the payment of debts incurred by princes of the blood, but he is not satisfied as to the justice or necessity of these substitutes. He is equally unable or indisposed to see that placemen and pensioners are anything else than abuses incarnated in human shape. He wishes that high officials of State—Prime Minister, Lord Chancellor, and the like—should be paid, and well paid. But when the season of work is over he considers that their claim upon the public funds is at an end. He applies the principle of a good day's wage for a good day's labour in the most generous sense to the learned professions, but he is emphatically opposed to the solid remuneration of well-earned leisure.

Tenacious of his own rights, he is the last person in the world to deny the possession of rights to his employer, and he displays no inclination to impose fancifully exacting duties upon Government for the

enforcement of what is due to himself. Here it is that the English working man may be compared advantageously with the working man of other countries. There is less tendency to socialism here than amongst other peoples of the Old World or of the New. The English working man takes, for the most part, a view admirably practical and temperate of the functions of the State. The national workshops of revolutionary France have no attraction for him. He makes none of those extravagant claims upon the protection of the State in the regulation of his daily labour and of the rate of his wages which are current among the working classes of America and France, and which cause a certain form of socialism to be equally the pest of the Great Republic and the greatest military empire the world has seen. When a congress of English working men discuss their condition, they do so in its relation to the State. When a congress of French working men meet, the State and its legislation are entirely ignored, and the assumption which underlies the arguments of all speakers is that the economic relations of society must be transformed if civilisation is to advance. The difference between French and English working men could not be better put than in a passage from an article on a French working man's congress, contributed by Mr. Frederick Harrison to the *Fortnightly Review* of July, 1878 :—

“The French Congress is in marked contrast to the English assemblies. With us the discussions turn entirely on matters of practical legislation ; certain bills before Parliament are to be

supported or opposed ; certain official inquiries, regulations, or concessions are demanded. Nine-tenths of what goes on in an English Trades Union Congress has relation to the House or the Home Office. There is nothing of the kind at Lyons. There not a single bill pending at Versailles is even mentioned throughout the discussions ; no reference to a single parliamentary party or even politician ; there is not a public man, not a single employer, not a public writer with whom the Congress has the smallest relation, or in whom it seems to put the slightest confidence. The Radicals, the extreme Left, are all treated as being just as hostile as the extreme Right, the most ultra-republican journals, including that of M. Rochefort, are utterly repudiated ; indeed, M. Rochefort is called the Red Jesuit ; nor is there a single capitalist who seems to be in the slightest degree of contact with them. Now in England we know there are dozens of members of Parliament, and even members of governments, and that on both sides, from whom the bills of our workmen's congresses receive active support ; at every annual meeting there are great employers and great capitalists, public men and public writers, in constant intercourse with them. Men in the same position as Mr. Brassey, Mr. Mundella, Mr. Forster, Mr. Chamberlain, Mr. Samuel Morley, Lord Lichfield, Mr. Hughes, and the like, are utterly unknown in the French movement. The idea of popular Conservative employers is still more completely incomprehensible. Such a man as Mr. Cross, a Conservative Minister of the Interior, legalising trades unions and codifying the vast network of factory legislation, would indeed be a portent in France. It is clear that the legislature in France is immensely behind that of England in its interest in labour questions, that the political and powerful classes in France are in no sort of real contact with the workmen ; and that great employers or great landowners having their confidence can hardly be said to exist. One cannot fail to see how far more truly the governing classes in England in their own way sympathise with, and work at, the great social problems ; how much less sharp is the antagonism of class here ; how much the English labourers owe to that mass of protective legislation, against which the men and women with a crotchet are so urgent in protesting. At Lyons, M. Gambetta is simply a bourgeois politician ; M. de Marcère is simply a continuation of M. de Fourtou ; Victor Hugo is simply a poet ; and Jules Simon is merely an intriguer. The

French workmen still cling to their old idea of fashioning the future by themselves alone—though now, be it said, without subversive measures, without legislation, and even without the State.”

In the course of the last fifty years we have had an entire series of legislative enactments devised for the protection of women and children engaged in different kinds of industry. The form which this State interference has assumed has been of various kinds. It has prohibited the working of women and children beyond a certain number of hours, and in the case of children it has even enforced a certain qualification of knowledge as well as of years. The principle on which the State in these matters has throughout proceeded is that it is bound to protect those who cannot protect themselves, and that within this category children and women come. The observance of these laws is guaranteed, so far as it is possible to guarantee them, by an elaborate system of State inspection. Inspectors are continually paying surprise visits to see that there is no infraction of the laws regulating the employment of women and children, and that the sanitary condition of the factories and the workshops in which men are employed is satisfactory. Thus everything which could encourage the idea that the State is under the most minute and positive obligations to the working man has been done by the Legislature. Could there, then, be any more conclusive testimony to the sanity of working men's views of the responsibilities of the Government than the circumstance that in all this time not one petition has been presented to Parliament praying for

any interference with the conditions of adult male labour? Further, it must be remembered that the demand for factory legislation came, not from the operatives in factories themselves, but from eminent philanthropists outside—Lord Shaftesbury and others. Public opinion amongst the working classes does what it does not do in America, Germany, France, or Switzerland; it draws the line, short of which legislative interference must stop, at the daily work of full-grown men, and the right of free contract between employed and employer. Wherever it has been tried, interference beyond these limits has proved a blunder and a failure. In the United States it has broken down. In Switzerland, where it was introduced in 1877, it is the reverse of a success. In Germany and in France it has paved the way for the propagation of Socialism. It is contended by Mr. Fawcett and other authorities that the responsibilities with which the law charges itself in the case of the labour of women are an infraction on the right of free contract. Practically, the vindication of such interference seems complete. In the first place, it works well; in the second, it cannot be asserted that the average woman is at any period of her life a free agent in the sense that a man is a free agent. Up to the age of eighteen she is subject to the authority of her parents, and a very grinding despotism that authority often is. If at the age of eighteen she marries—and early marriages are the rule among the working classes—she becomes little more than the chattel of her husband.

Though it does not come within the scope of this work to trace the history of factory legislation, it is necessary briefly to summarise certain central stages in its progress. The factory legislation of to-day is the work of rather more than three-quarters of a century. Starting from what was merely an Apprentices Act in 1802, when the factory system was in its infancy, and nearly all for whom it provided employment were regularly apprenticed, it reached, in the Consolidation Act of 1878, a culminating point of efficiency and comprehensiveness, beyond which, in the present century, it is not likely to advance. The Act of 1802, which provided for the better clothing, better sleeping rooms, and the separation of the sexes in the case of apprentices only, was extended eight, and again twenty-three, years later to all boys and girls engaged in factories, whether they were apprentices or not. But none of these provisions, however admirable in design, accomplished much in practice, for the simple reason that the law did not supply the means of enforcing them. It was a further defect that they only applied to cotton, and not to woollen or worsted factories. In 1833, all textile factories were included in the Act, inspectors were established, and the hours of labour, of young persons and children only, were limited to twelve a day, it being left entirely to the discretion of the employer between what hours the work should be done, subject to the one condition that it should not be carried on during the night.

It was not till eleven years later, 1844, that any legislation at all adequate to the complexity and vital importance of the matter became an accomplished fact. In that year the principle was asserted that the law owed the duties of protection to women as well as children, and since that date factory legislation has applied to female workers as well as to their youthful sons and daughters. At the same time the machinery guaranteeing obedience to the law was improved; regular holidays were established in addition to Good Friday and Christmas Day. It was also enacted that the machinery should be fenced. Yet even thus the parliamentary statute was frequently evaded, and, as the employers worked by relays of women and children, the inspectors could never certainly know what was the precise hour at which the operations of a particular group had commenced. Meanwhile the Factory Act had been extended to print works, and the ten hours movement had made great advances, but ten hours as the limit of time for the employment of women and young persons was not conceded till twelve years after, and, instead, a compromise of ten and a half hours daily was admitted. In 1861 bleach works, and in 1864 paper-staining, lucifer match making, potteries, and cartridge-making, and all deleterious employments were brought under the operation of the Act. In 1867 the Factory Acts Extension Act and the Workshops Regulation Act were both passed—the practical effect of the two combined being to bring all occupations in which women and young persons were employed under



regulation and restriction. Especially was the influence of the Act beneficial in its effect upon the employment of young women in the dressmaking trade. Still, one great defect in factory legislation remained—the Workshops Act was entirely in the hands of the local authority. In 1870 this shortcoming was remedied, and henceforward the Workshops Act was enforced by the Government factory inspectors. Four years later in every kind of textile factory the number of hours a day was limited to ten. It was further enacted that no child should be employed under ten, and that no young person under thirteen should be employed full time without an educational certificate. Although, up to this time, attendance at school had more or less been enforced upon the half-time principle between the ages of eight and thirteen, no certificate had been required, and in the case of many trades—such as print-works—children were permitted to keep their half-time attendances when and how they pleased—an option which frequently resulted in school being systematically shirked.

The Factory and Workshops Act of 1878, while it repealed or consolidated upwards of a hundred pieces of different legislation, brought all kinds of factories, iron and hardware as well as textile, within the province of the Act, but did not extend to them the ten hours limit, the reason being that the proportion of women and children employed in these industries is much smaller than in the case of textile mills. Legislation, however, seems scarcely wanted to enforce the ten

hours' rule. Practically, custom has already fixed that as the period beyond which neither men, women, nor children should work. When on sudden emergencies—such as the necessity for executing an order before a given time, or of anticipating a fall in the market—employers arrange with their hands to prolong the usual spell, they find that the rate of extra production is not such as to repay the expenditure of the extra wage. There is overwhelming testimony on all hands to show that the men have acquired the habit of putting forth all their energy within the limits of the ten hours. It is the same with the women, children, and young persons engaged in bookbinding and other trades to which special immunities are granted. The labour may be continued, but the spirit and care with which it is performed are relaxed. Exhausted nature refuses to respond to the undue demand.\*

\* It may perhaps be as well succinctly to summarise, for the convenience of the reader, the chief heads of the factory legislation now in force. A factory is defined to mean any premises in which mechanical power is used in a manufacturing process, or in which certain trades such as lucifer match making, percussion caps and cartridge making, book binding, letterpress printing, tobacco and cigar manufacturing, are carried on. It follows from the above definition that all corn mills and nearly all breweries and distilleries have now become factories. The number of protected persons employed in such establishments as these—that is to say, of women, children, and young persons—is not large, and the chief value of inspection as applied to them will consist in the additional protection which will be thereby given to the people employed from dangerous machinery or from preventible dust and effluvia arising either from the process of manufacture itself, or from defective sanitary arrangements. "Factories" under the Act of 1878 are classified "textile" and "non-textile." There is no change made in the number of hours in which women, young persons, and children may be employed in either case. In textile factories it remains at fifty-six and a half hours a week, as fixed by the Factory Act of 1874, while in non-textile factories it will continue sixty hours a week, as fixed by the Act of 1867. The provisions of the Act of 1874, which apply to the employment of children and young persons, are now extended to all non-textile factories and workshops. A child

For the full results of factory legislation we shall yet have to wait some time. It is impossible to make the effect of a law coincident with its passing. But the work already accomplished by the Factory Acts is immense. While they have certainly cured all the evils existing in the first half of the century, they have, in addition, created a strong public feeling in favour of their humanising agency. They have been the foundation of the Factory Acts of all other countries, and if it is wanted to know what are the evils which the existence of such measures prevent, an idea may be derived from the condition of the factories of Belgium and India. In each of these countries many of the revelations contained in the Report of the Children's Employments Commission (1862), long since happily obsolete in England, are matters of daily experience. In the pottery districts of the United Kingdom, less than fifteen years ago, 11,000 children and young persons were employed under conditions fatal alike to

cannot legally be employed in future under any circumstances under ten years of age. At thirteen a child may be employed full time provided that it can produce a certificate of having passed the fourth standard fixed by the Committee of the Council on Education. In the event of a child not being able to produce such a certificate it must continue at school half time till it reaches the age of fourteen. The choice is given under the Act of 1878 to all occupiers of factories, whether textile or non-textile, to work throughout the year either from six to six or from seven to seven, as they may select. The privilege of working from eight to eight is given to a limited number of trades and occupations, which do not appear to embrace all who enjoyed it under the old Act. The Secretary of State has power to give this permission to a trade when the necessity for it is proved but a representation to him on the subject must be forwarded through the chief inspector. Various modifications relating to holidays and meal-times are granted to meet the special emergencies of particular trades. The occupier of a factory is bound to send notice to the inspector should he fail to be visited or to receive official notice.

mental and bodily health. They commenced work in childhood—some between six and seven, and others between seven and eight, eight and nine, and nine and ten. Their hours of labour were from five a.m. to six p.m., but in numberless instances they were required to work on till eight, nine, or ten p.m., and this in an atmosphere varying from 100 to 120 degrees, and in a few instances as high as 148 degrees, in rooms, or rather “stoves,” about thirteen feet square, and from eight to twelve feet high. In the winter these children were sent abroad on errands, with the mercury twenty degrees below freezing point, without stockings, shoes, or jackets, and with the perspiration streaming from their foreheads. As might have been expected, numbers of them died from consumption, asthma, and acute inflammations. This condition of things is absolutely non-existent now. The children of tender age are to be found employed at this labour no longer. The law has given workers in these places protection to life and health generally, improved ventilation, and respite from toil at regular intervals. The employers have discovered that improved ventilation means economy in production, and that unless provision is made for the escape of the moisture from the clay the articles are not properly dried. Defective ventilation there, of course, still is, and for some time must remain. Whether in the pottery districts or elsewhere, the old workshops were seldom constructed upon sound principles, and till these have been replaced by new workshops built upon an

improved plan some abuses must continue to exist. Meanwhile, a vital reform has been effected by the construction in every instance of the stove outside the workshop, and the factory inspectors bear witness to the laudable readiness with which all the larger employers are adopting the newest and most effective improvements.

In the same way the scandals which once disgraced the paper trade are no longer to be met with. We shall look in vain now for parents who have to carry children of seven years old on their back through the snow, to work sixteen hours a day, kneeling down to feed them at the machine. The business is at the present moment in the hands of large employers, who have executed the provisions of the law with equal fidelity and promptitude. The same process of improvement has been going on in the lucifer match trade. Factory legislation has killed the small manufacturers, whose establishments were the hot-beds of systematic abuse. Thus one factory, employing six men and fifteen boys, consisted of two small sheds, the latter shed being about 20 by 11 feet, with no ventilation whatever. This place served for both "dipping" and drying room, as well as for mixing and heating the sulphur and the phosphorus composition. The other shed, also without ventilation, was about 30 by 10 feet. Here all the remaining processes were carried on, the number of processes varying altogether from about ten to twenty. Hither children brought their meals, and here they ate them, suiting

the time of eating to their work. While in London there were, ten years ago, between thirty or forty match manufactories of this kind, there are probably at the present moment not more than half a dozen on a small scale, and even these are well conducted. The large manufacturers being able to produce the article more cheaply, the smaller employers have inevitably gone to the wall.

In the brick-making trade there were, for some time after the above abuses had been remedied, from 20,000 to 30,000 children employed between the ages of three and four and sixteen and seventeen. George Smith, of Coaiville, has said of himself that at the age of nine he was employed in continually carrying about forty pounds of clay upon his head from the clay heap to the table on which the bricks were made. This work had to be performed, almost without a break, for thirteen hours daily. One night, after his customary day's work, he was compelled to carry 1,200 nine-inch bricks from the maker to the floors on which they harden. The distance thus walked by the child was quite fourteen miles, seven of which were travelled with eleven pounds' weight of clay in his arms, and for this labour he received sixpence. It is only quite recently that brickyards have been brought within the operation of the Factory Acts. Until that was done the factory inspectors had no power of enforcing the Workshops Act, and many brickyard proprietors purposely subjected themselves to the operation of the latter measure, by keeping the

number of hands employed under fifty. At the present day the employment of girls under sixteen is absolutely forbidden in brickyards: in point of fact, very few girls are employed in these places at all; and pending the settlement of the question, whether the employment should not be forbidden to all women also, the number of women thus occupied is decreasing daily.

There is one gross blot upon the social condition of industrial England which has yet to be entirely removed. It has been estimated that there are about 22,000 men, 22,000 women, and 72,000 children floating up and down the country on its rivers and canals. It also appears that some 26,000 of the 44,000 men and women are living in an unmarried state, and that about 40,000 of the 72,000 children are illegitimate.\* Although these barges, for sanitary purposes, are by the Public Health Act considered houses, it is quite impracticable to exercise due supervision over such a floating and fleeting population, and thus when disease is on board, which is frequently the case, barges act as centres whence infectious maladies are propagated throughout the country.

In the condition of workers in shops there is still room for considerable improvement. Here the factory inspectors have great obstacles to encounter, and are called upon to exercise much judgment. It is exceedingly hard to prove, without a degree of inquisitorial interference which would enlist public sympathy

\* Factory Reports for the half-year ending October 31, 1875, page 128.

on behalf of the breakers of the law, that the law has been infringed. Magistrates have a strong objection to interfering with people who are engaged in the making of a livelihood. The signal success of the Factory Acts is in a great degree due to the discretion with which they have been administered. It is because the inspectors have been uniformly willing to hear both sides, to act as arbitrators between employers and employed, before proceeding summarily to arraign the former, that they have produced amongst the class of employers generally a disposition to execute and assist the Acts. The Saturday half-holiday, prescribed by the law, has in some instances given rise to considerable practical difficulty. The employer, when it has been pointed out to him that the law requires him to give all the young women in his establishment the benefit of the Saturday half-holiday, has replied that this would inevitably compel him to reduce the number of his hands. In these cases the inspectors have sometimes been able to recommend a compromise. The Saturday half-holiday has been taken alternately by the different *employées*, with entire satisfaction to all concerned.

The consideration of the working of the Education Acts of 1870 and 1876 must not be separated from the working of the Factory Acts. Both have been indispensable agencies in the great task of reforming the condition of the manufacturing districts; and while the number of instances in which they are systematically infringed is shown by the report of the



inspectors to be annually diminishing, the feeling against those guilty of such infractions is more pronounced. The law as it now stands prohibits and penalises the employment of all children under ten years of age, and the employment of children as half-timers of less than thirteen, and who have not passed in the fourth standard—who cannot, in other words, read and write, compose a simple essay or letter on a familiar subject, who have not mastered the chief rudimentary facts of the history of their country, and the geography of the world, as well as the art of keeping plain accounts. How satisfactorily this system works may be judged from the reports of the school inspectors. “The Factory Act of 1874,” writes one of the inspectors in his report to the Education Office for 1876, “contains a clause which is directly educational, and is likely to work important results. Hitherto every child might, at the age of thirteen, cease attending school, and commence working full time at the mill, without any question being asked about the state of his education, and, accordingly, thousands of children have passed through their half-time career without rising higher than Standard I. or II., or even without passing any standard.” It is further the opinion of many who are entitled in such a matter to be considered experts, that the wits of children working half-time are sharpened, and that they can compete not unsuccessfully with the whole-timers. The reason probably is that the half-timer is compelled to be regular in attendance, and it thus often happens that a child who spends not less than

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thirteen or fourteen hours a week all the year round at school, derives greater benefit than the child who is at school twenty-five hours a week with indifferent regularity. Add to this that the influence of the school teaching continues when the teaching itself is not actually in progress, and that the half-timer is unceasingly exercising his receptive powers when he is at work in the factory.

Although the Factory Acts have from the first contained educational clauses, they have never primarily had an educational purpose. It was their object to prevent the child working before a certain age, and as the best of all proofs that he was not at work was the fact that he was at school, school attendances were required by the law. Thus, from one point of view, the provisions of the Education Acts of 1870 and of 1876 may be regarded as supplementing the educational clauses of the Factory Acts. The School Boards can do anything which is not contrary to the Factory Acts; they may exceed the letter of those laws, but they cannot violate their spirit; they may go beyond them, but they must not fall short of them. Where the Factory Act prescribes a certain standard, the School Board may raise that standard, but cannot reduce it. Thus, the School Boards can over-ride the labour laws, but only on condition that their edicts go farther in the direction which the labour laws contemplate. Considerable discretion in industrial matters is thus reposed in the School Boards; they frequently refuse to grant certificates to

half-timers, unless they are satisfied that the parents are in a condition to render the child's labour necessary.

It is clear, however, that on the educational side of the Factory Acts certain reforms are still wanted. In the first place, it is desirable that permission to begin to work at the age of ten should be conditional on a certain educational standard having been reached. This condition is imposed by some School Board authorities, but it is very far from being universal. Secondly, except in cases in which factories and schools are far apart, only one form of half-time attendance should be allowed to count, namely, attendance on the morning or afternoon of every day. The obvious disadvantage of the alternate, or whole-day system, is that when they are not at school children are employed for a length of time entirely unsuited to their strength, and for which no compensation is forthcoming in the comparative physical rest of an entire day's schooling.

There is a third and more serious abuse of which the possibility will always remain until some considerable alteration has been made in the existing law. There are many parts of England, especially the midland counties, in which agricultural and manufacturing districts mutually overlap. Parents living in such neighbourhoods as these are not slow to take advantage of the difference between the educational legislation of manufacturing and of agricultural England. So long as this difference is not removed there will be a natural temptation to parents to send children at the age of ten years to work on farms and in the fields, having, of

course, satisfied the modest requirements of the educational standard fixed in the case of rural labour. At the end of three or four years the child will be of an age which qualifies him to obtain the higher wages paid in manufacturing labour, but as his school days have come prematurely to an end he will not have reached the educational standard prescribed by the Factory Acts. By bringing a child under the jurisdiction of the Agricultural Children's Act in the first instance, and of the Factory Act in the second, the parents have satisfied the letter of both laws, while violating the general purpose of each. It is difficult to see how this is to be obviated, unless complete uniformity between our educational statutes in town and country is established.

The truck system is another of the abuses which legislation has aimed at removing, for whose removal the legislative machinery exists, but which, in consequence of the difficulty of putting that machinery into force, lingers on in some few districts. It may be justly urged that the expense of prosecution under the Truck Act should not be borne by the workman, who would be sure to lose his employment, while the penalties for breaches of the Truck Act by the masters are too small to counterbalance the influence of considerable profits. Truck is a mischief of long standing, and is in its origin contemporary with the growth of the staple manufactures of the country. Some idea may be formed of the lucrativeness of the system to those who are, or were, its promoters from the fact

that at the branch establishment of a certain company in Wales the entire wages earned amounted to about £200,000; that of this £130,000 in round numbers was paid before pay-day in advances, of which £62,000 was taken to the shops, that the total purchases of the shops was £70,000 for the year, and the sales realised £84,000, thus leaving a gross balance of £14,000.

It would be, perhaps, safer to say that truck is steadily dying, than that it is actually dead. There are collieries of the midland districts in which what is practically truck, though the name is not used, is far from unknown. When stoppages of wages are made for compulsory club and school payments, which are in the hands of the proprietors, and out of which the proprietors sometimes make a profit; when deductions are made from wages if children fail to attend church or chapel schools on Sunday, it is impossible to speak of truck as entirely non-existent. On the other hand, it is probable that flagrant violations of the Truck Act are chiefly confined to the nail trade. The petty nail masters, in many instances, keep provision and other shops, at which their hands are expected to trade; the wives get into debt at these establishments, and the debt is liquidated by the stoppage of a certain portion of the weekly wage. Instances, moreover, could be mentioned in which employers still give orders on these shops in lieu of wages. In an area of some fifteen or twenty miles round Dudley in Staffordshire about

25,000 hands are employed, and, speaking roughly, about 14,000 are trucked. The average wages for a nailer making common nails, working fourteen hours a day, would be 9s. to 10s. a week, and where there is a wife and children to help him 12s. a week may be earned. These people live in hovels, and are perpetually in distress. They complain to this day that they have to pay 5d. for soap which could be got elsewhere for 3d., and 10d. for bacon which, of better quality, elsewhere costs 7d. Unable to get cash, these men re-sell at a loss articles purchased at the "fogger's" shop. They have been known to pay rent by re-selling flour to their landlord. The state of things disclosed by truck in the watch-making trade is not less painful. One of those employed in this industry remarks, "If men did not take watches from their employer they would get no work. He himself had been in the habit of taking £5 watches and getting £2 10s. for them." Another workman says, "I have had three watches from ———. He charged me £6 10s. for the first—a gold Geneva watch. I kept it for some time, and then I pledged it for £1 10s., and I sold the pawn-ticket for 10s."

There are other specific abuses which, the beneficent operation of Factory Acts and the vigilant system of factory inspection notwithstanding, have yet to be rooted out. In the case of white-lead manufacture, many improvements have recently been adopted by which the illness and disease of those engaged in it have been immensely reduced. Such a reform is the

casting the lead into frames, to facilitate carbonisation by machinery instead of by hand, and the washing and brushing of the pots in which the lead is formed by machinery. The means have yet to be devised to prevent the inhalation of the white-lead dust by the workers. Here, as elsewhere, incalculable mischief is done by the absence of any definite and universally enforced rules. It is practically too often left to the discretion of the manufacturer whether the sanitary condition of factories is good or bad. In some establishments gloves and respirators, caps and dresses for women, canvas trowsers and boots for the men are provided—in others there is nothing of the sort.

In a report dated October, 1875, Mr. Redgrave makes it clear that there are other industries almost as dangerous in their conditions, and disastrous in their results, as white-lead works, especially the silvering of looking-glasses, and the cutting and preparing of mill-stones. He writes: "In a shop where mill-stones are prepared are to be seen men in every stage of suffering. The robust young countryman, attracted by good wages, thinking probably that he may be able to weather the storm; then he who was robust but is now pale, and harassed by cough; then through the various phases, up to the shrunk hetic invalid, whose frail body is actually wrenched by that cruel cough, and as to whom we are told, 'Oh, he won't last above two months.'" Mr. Redgrave's practical conclusion is that Parliament will not have discharged its full duty until it has insisted upon the universal

use in these establishments of gloves, respirators, clothes, caps, and boots.

Factory legislation, as we have already seen in the case of shops, if it is to be either just or effective in its working, must be conducted upon elastic principles. It is impossible to apply the same restrictions to all kinds of industries, and it is therefore necessary to give the inspectors a considerable amount of discretion in the making of recommendations which are to carry with them the force of law. Thus, one of the inspectors, Mr. Baker, says that in the case of woollen mills where cloth is manufactured or finished, several of the processes can only be carried on in daylight, and therefore, in the winter months, when the days are very short, and all such work is done by piece, he has given permission that the meal-hours of such workers shall not be limited to the general meal-hours of the rest of the workers. He has further permitted the same alteration in a few other works, with satisfaction to both masters and workers. Again, at a meeting of the sub-inspectors of Birmingham and the surrounding country, it was decided (1876) by a majority of six to one, that there were no industries to which the clause of the Factory Extension Act of 1867, making from six to six the compulsory working hours during the summer, and from seven to seven the optional working hours during the winter, should be applied; but that whether from six to six or seven to seven should be left to the choice of the workers all



the year through. The Manchester sub-inspectors were also of opinion that in the case of the various departments of the clothes manufactories the option should be given of working from eight to eight. These recommendations of the officers of the law have since become part of the law itself.

Speaking generally of the practical results, and the actual working of the Factory Laws at the present moment, it may be said that the latest reports of the inspectors point conclusively to two things: first, it is plain that the portion of the law which provides for the fencing of machinery, as a protection to the workers, requires to be more precisely worded and more stringently and uniformly enforced. Secondly, the reports of the inspectors of factories dated October, 1877, prove that the law restricting the hours of employment of women in factories works well, that it has recommended itself both to employers and employed, and that none of the evils or inconveniences or injustices which were anticipated as its possible results by Mr. Fawcett, and other competent critics, have actually arisen. "I have found," writes Mr. Redgrave, "the limitations imposed upon the hours of work by women most cordially approved, and the greatest anxiety, and positive alarm, entertained at the prospect of any relaxation which would expose them to the irregular and uncertain hours of work that prevailed prior to the passing of the Factory Act of 1867." Mr. Redgrave quotes many testimonies of working women in support and illustration of this view. "I decidedly

prefer," says one, "to work the hours fixed by the Factory Acts. I never had any illness since the Factory Act came into operation." "I certainly do not wish," says another, "to see the Factory Act repealed, and permission given to women to work later." "The Factory Act," says a third, "is regarded as a great boon by all the women that I know in the trade. I find I can earn more money under the Factory Act than when we had no regulations." It is thus that Mr. Redgrave sums up the general moral results of this legislation :—

"That the Factory Acts have a direct tendency to encourage morality and steady behaviour I can establish very clearly. More than once letters have reached me from parents of young girls employed in factories, complaining that they did not reach home till long after the legal time for closing. On tracing these complaints to their foundation the fault was found to rest with the girls, and not with the employers. To parents who exercise a watchful care over their children the factory regulations, it is obvious, must be of great value, as they cannot be deceived by the excuse that such children have been kept late at work.

"The argument that the tendency of the Factory Acts is to place an artificial restriction on the employment of women, and thus to depreciate the market value of their labour, is refuted on every hand by practical experience in the textile manufactories. Here the restrictions upon women's work are the most stringent ; and yet the tendency for a long series of years has been the opposite, the proportion of women employed has

steadily increased. The same observation applies to many of the trades and occupations carried on in London. As for the rate of wages paid, there is not an employer in the metropolis who will hesitate to acknowledge that there has been during the last ten or fifteen years a very substantial and important advance in the remuneration given to women for their work."

The social and moral condition of our manufacturing classes, and the physical deterioration of factory workers, are facts as lamentable as they are indisputable. Physical deterioration must be attributed quite as much to the vicious habits of parents, to the intemperance which transmits enfeebled constitutions to the next generation, as to the actual employment in factories. Thus, while it is true that "the physical strength and appearance suffer much in factories from confined, heated atmospheres, loaded with fine cotton fibres, fine flinty sand, and cutaneous exhalations; the number of gaslights, each light destroying oxygen equal to one man; and transitions from the mills and their temperatures to their dwellings," there is no doubt that as serious injury is done by the injudicious dieting of infants, who instead of being fed from the breast of their mothers are nurtured on pap, made of bread and water, and a little later on coffee and tea. It is bad enough that, as competent medical authorities tell us, the skin should secrete all the noxious qualities of an Indian climate, but it is even worse to hear "the offspring are reared with the bottle, and drugged by the mother. No doubt factory physique is not good, but

it is made worse by factory associations of vice and iniquity."

The culminating point of social scandal is probably reached in the Black Country. As a consequence of a state of things under which we read of publicans sallying forth from the Black Country to a township not far distant "to court and corrupt the girls of the place," it is not surprising to hear that bastardy is enormously prevalent. The following are a few illustrations of the current abominations of the neighbourhood. Nine people of both sexes and of all ages have only two bed-rooms. A man and his wife, with three lodgers—two men and the other a woman within two months of her expected confinement—have two bed-rooms. Working men on leaving the public-house have exchanged wives on the road home, the bargain has been adhered to, and the neighbours have not been shocked by the circumstance.\* These are features in the contemporary life of the Black Country which clearly indicate a state of things that calls for further legislative interference in such matters as women's and children's labour, over-crowding of houses, and the arrangements of houses. The State has already decided that such matters come within its due province, while they obviously belong to a category in which legislative machinery has been found by experience beneficent and effective. Every improvement in the Black Country during the last forty years, we are told by

\* Factory Reports for the half-year ending October 31, 1875, pages 120 *et seq.*

Mr. Baker, "has been either originated or at least fostered and helped forward by the law—*e.g.*, the repeal of the old Poor Law, the suppression of bull-baiting, of women's work in coal-pits, the partial abolition of the truck system. If under a revised or new law a man finds he cannot screw as much out of his wife's and children's work, he will be compelled to work on Monday and Tuesday instead of going out to amuse himself. Doubtless the wives and mothers among nailers will recover strength from having their hours of labour curtailed, and be able to keep house and nourish their babies. In short, English homes and English families might again become the rule instead of the exception."

Analogous improvements to those accomplished in manufacturing England have also been effected by legislation in mining England. By successive measures of reform which have become law since 1850, it has been provided that each colliery should have a certified manager, who, with the owner and agent, is responsible for the due observance at the pit of the regulations prescribed by law. Government inspectors have been empowered to visit the mines and report upon their condition; the working hours of boys, and of women and girls, have been restricted; the employment of the latter underground has been absolutely prohibited, and, with certain limited exemptions, the double shaft made compulsory. The compulsory appointment of a certificated master was a reform of much importance. That official now passes

an examination, which, though it varies materially in different districts, is always thoroughly effective. Sometimes the examiners base their decisions on the candidate's qualifications as a mining engineer; sometimes on his general intelligence and education; in other cases on the amount of his experience in coal-mines. The system of inspection is an exceedingly important one, though it is not universally, and, indeed, very rarely, carried to the extreme point originally contemplated by the Act. Existing legislation, however, has about it an indefiniteness which it is most desirable should be remedied, and the fact that different "readings" of the Act are in vogue in the same localities is a suggestive commentary on the need of revision.

Once we have made our acquaintance with the mining population of England, we shall find ourselves in the midst of many contrasts and startling varieties. The conditions under which the pitmen work are far from uniform, their scale of pay is diverse, their condition, tastes, and character vary as much as do the localities and the circumstances of their labour. The Welsh miner is unlike the Staffordshire pitman, while Derbyshire, Yorkshire, and Lancashire each has its peculiar type of subterranean toiler—the Lancashire miner being for the most part a keen politician, and the Yorkshire miner a keen sportsman. Going northwards, we shall encounter tribes of men equally distinct in Northumberland and Durham, while, if we were to cross the border, and to make our way into

Scotland, we should be in another world of fresh experiences. Generally it may be said that the miners of Northumberland and Durham are the best specimens of their class, the most intelligent, the most enlightened, humane, thrifty, and devout. In Northumberland there will be found a greater purity of stock, in Durham there is to be seen a larger admixture of foreign blood. The one county is aboriginal and exclusive; the other, though it adjoins it, is cosmopolitan and comprehensive. From the south, east, and west of England, from Scotland, and from Ireland, and even from the continent of Europe, the great army of Durham miners is perpetually being reinforced. In Northumberland, on the other hand, there is to be seen no such continuous and voluminous stream of immigrants. Yet, though these facts cannot fail to have made themselves felt upon the ways of life and thoughts of the miners in the two counties, there are many resemblances to be observed between them. Both in Durham and Northumberland—as for the matter of that, in other counties where mining is carried on—the external appearance of the mining settlements does not greatly differ. Here, as elsewhere, there is the same incrustation of coal-dust upon the stunted vegetation—sure sign of the contiguity of a battle-ground on which man is contending against nature; the same long, straight, parallel rows of one-storied houses, the dwellings for the most part studiously neat within, and the gardens well and tastefully decorated without, for scrupulous tidiness seems a general

characteristic of the miners of England. As a rule, too, the pitmen in all parts keep themselves distinct from the rest of the population, a fact which is partly to be attributed to the distance of many colliery colonies from towns. Even where they are in the immediate suburb of a considerable centre of industry, the miners show little disposition to amalgamate with the rest of the population.

It is a hard and perilous life, though science and humanity have done not a little to mitigate its lot. If the average age of the miner is considerably less than that of the worker in textile factories, it is not so much because he is the peculiar victim of fatal diseases as because he is, in a special degree, exposed to calamitous accidents. On the contrary, although the average life of the miner, which may be generally computed at thirty years, is considerably shorter than that of the factory worker, which may perhaps be estimated at thirty-eight and forty, which, again, is ten years less than that of the professional man, he is a prey to comparatively few diseases. Nor do asthma, bronchitis, and other forms of zymotic malady prevail among his class to anything like the same extent that they do among the factory workers. If the work itself is exhausting, it must be remembered that not only is it not continuous throughout the week, never engaging more than eleven days out of fourteen, frequently not more than eight, and in bad times not more than six, but that the domestic life is marked by much healthiness and comfort. In the large collieries of Durham and



Northumberland, the owners provide cottages for the men over and above their regular wages, to each of which a little garden is attached, wherein is a pigstye. The pigs are the objects of friendly rivalry and competition amongst their proprietors, who sometimes parade them on holidays and in leisure hours down the streets of the little colony. Again, amongst the miners, it is a point of honour as well as of duty for the wife—who very seldom, unless in the neighbourhood of big towns, goes out to work—to look after the house and to keep it wholesome and comfortable. The colliery districts, too, are well supplied with medical men, while in many cases the infantile diseases, which were caused by want of milk, have been extirpated by the institution of dairies established by the men themselves, and in a few instances kept by the foreman or manager of the mine.

It is also no small thing that these strenuous workers should be as richly supplied as they are with the means of healthfully absorbing recreation and amusement. It is a mistake to suppose that the miner, the whole of whose affections are centred on his dog, and who feasts on champagne and spring chicken, while his wife and children starve, is a representative specimen of his order; as a matter of fact, the Durham and Northumberland pitman is frequently a teetotaler, and has no more favourite place of occupation for his leisure hours than the reading-room or the mechanics' institute, which is sure to exist in every mining district. The mining youth are also

given to athletic games, and are often good cricketers and quoit players. Nor do they organise brass bands unsuccessfully, and often exhibit very considerable taste and skill in music. The humanising influences of religion, science, and literature have been signally displayed amongst the mining population. It would be difficult to discover a more God-fearing race of men than the miners of the north, and bishops and clergy of the Established Church have borne striking testimony to the elevating and purifying effect of the religious tenets of that Primitive Methodism which is the spiritual faith of hundreds of the colliers of Northumberland and Durham. As for secular culture, they are earnest politicians, and keen newspaper readers. Here one of the advantages of unionism may be seen. While part of the action of the unions has been shown in the power which they have given their members at times of pressure, when work has been scarce, to migrate to neighbourhoods where employment is more plentiful, so their influence has not been less signally or satisfactorily displayed in the inducements which the organisation has offered to its members to watch closely the events of the day, and to deduce from them sound political morals. All the applied sciences are much studied, geology especially being a favourite.

The working life of the miner may be said to begin at twelve years of age. Before the Mines Regulation Act came into force the age was often ten, and ten still is the number of hours a day which he is on duty, beginning work usually at six a.m. and leaving off at

four p.m. The phases of industry to which the miner's existence is at successive stages devoted are pretty nearly as follows :—He serves his apprenticeship for the first three years, being charged during this time with the duty of driving the horses that draw away the loads of coal from beneath the axes of the men who detach it in huge blocks. This style of toil is technically described as that of “putting.” Really exhausting work is seldom begun till the physical system is fairly set, and at the age of eighteen or twenty the lad who has hitherto been fulfilling comparatively light duties as “putter” will be promoted to the more arduous calling of a “hewer.” This pursuit is the normal business of the full-grown miner, and he continues at it in the ordinary course of things till he has arrived at or has exceeded the limit of middle age. Sometimes he continues a “hewer” till he is upwards of three-score years and ten, but it is exceedingly seldom that his system stands the prolongation of the strain beyond the age of fifty or sixty. Even when he is superannuated there is still work for him to do on the establishment of the mine ; thus he may be employed as a shifter when he is too old to do active work as a hewer, and in this capacity he will have to clear the ground for the hewers after the regular day's toil is over. It is difficult to speak comprehensively as to the wages of the miner, which vary not only according to localities, but according to the condition of business, which is itself a very fluctuating quantity. The “putters,” who are paid by the score, earn from 2s. 6d. to 3s. 6d. a day ; the “hewers,”

who are paid by the piece, may make as much as 5s. a day; the "shifters" are seldom remunerated at a higher rate than the "putters." It is to be noticed, however, that in those cases in which, as in Northumberland, the daily wage is higher, it very often happens that the total annually made is lower, for the simple reason that the work is less continuous.

Something has already been said of the general attitude of the English working man towards his employer. Though daily experience testifies to a great and growing improvement in the relations between the representatives of capital and labour, we are still a long way from the ideal which the patient resignation of the operatives of Lancashire and the north, with admirable composure, to the melancholy results of the paralysis in the cotton trade consequent upon the American civil war led some persons rather precipitately to expect. The truth is, that the Lancashire working classes, during this great struggle, curbed their discontent, because their political instructors told them to recognise the issue between two grand principles in the war—freedom and slavery. The want and distress, they were taught to believe, were the inseparable accidents of a contest which could only end in the triumphant assertion of the rights of human nature and the sanctity of human freedom. On the other hand, whenever the attitude of the working classes, under pressure of sore distress, has been less tranquil, it is illogical and unjust to recognise the motive or source of trouble in unionism, and to look

back regretfully to the period when the laws prohibiting combination were in full force. Considerable restrictions were imposed upon industrial combination till within the last quarter of a century, but with results that can scarcely be considered advantageous to the relations of employer and employed. In 1811 the town, neighbourhood, and county of Nottingham were terrorised by gangs of operatives in the hosiery trade on strike, who went about destroying frames at the rate of two hundred a week. They made their attacks in parties of from six to fifty, armed with swords, pistols, sledge-hammers, and axes. On one occasion they held the town against the regular soldiers, who were called in to quell the disturbance, and peace was barely maintained by the concentration of a military force of about 800 horse and 1,000 foot around Nottingham. Still the destruction of frames increased. At the Nottingham March Assizes, 1812, four frame-breakers were sentenced to fourteen, and three to seven years' transportation. In the same month an Act was passed punishing with death any person deliberately breaking a frame, a measure memorable, if on no other account, for the protest which it elicited from Lord Byron. "Whilst," he said, speaking in the House of Peers, "these outrages must be admitted to exist to an alarming extent, it cannot be denied that they have arisen from circumstances of the most unparalleled distress. The perseverance of these miserable men in their proceedings tends to prove that nothing but absolute want could have driven a

large and once honest and industrious body of the people into the commission of excesses so hazardous to themselves, their families, and the community." Meanwhile the outrages continued. In October, 1814, the house of a man who had caused the apprehension of a "Luddite" was attacked, and an encounter ensued, in which one of the assailants was shot. Altogether about 1,000 stocking frames and 80 lace machines were destroyed during this period of popular frenzy. Disturbances almost as serious were repeated more than twenty years later, with the additional accompaniment of incendiarism upon a formidable scale. There are many persons living who can well recollect the ~~or~~ious spectacle, visible from Nottingham Castle, of nineteen ricks simultaneously in flames; and the great feature in all this is that it did not provoke any strong outburst of public indignation, as trade outrages of all kinds have recently done.

In the present day, if ten men are on strike in any manufacturing town in the United Kingdom, the circumstance is immediately reported, probably commented upon, in the daily newspapers, and gloomy prognostications are drawn of an impending war between capital and labour, and its possible results. It is not to be claimed on behalf of trade unions that they have wrung from the working classes a rigid determination to recognise in their demands and in their acts the undeviating operation of inexorable economic laws, or that they have exorcised completely the evil spirit of violence and outrage. But in the last decade there

have only been two notable instances of unionist scandals—the first, that of the Broadhead riot at Sheffield in 1867; the second, that which culminated in the firing of Colonel Jackson's house in Lancashire eleven years later. In both it is no exaggeration to say that these crimes were bitterly regretted and unequivocally condemned by the majority of the class which had to bear the burden of their reproach.

To what is it legitimate to attribute the undoubted improvement in feeling between employers and employed in England? It may be inferred from the few but essentially typical data given above that whatever the charges of conspiracy and violence brought against unionists and unionism, they are entirely eclipsed by the outbreaks of popular frenzy in those days in which no such organisations as trade unions existed. The fact is, that though the trade union is comparatively an institution of modern growth, it is in every way an improvement upon its predecessor, the secret society. Combination is an instinct which, as the law cannot eradicate it, it is sound policy on the part of the law to recognise. It exists in professions as well as trades and industries, in the learned professions as well as in the unlearned; in the medical, legal, and clerical professions, as well as in the commercial. The trade union is, in fact, only an application of that principle of association which is part of human nature. This the Duke of Argyle has pointed out with considerable force in his chapter on association in the “Reign of Law.” Combination has its origin in the inborn impulse of

self-defence. Take the case of Preston, or Blackburn, or any other centre of the cotton industry. All the employés are engaged in much the same kind of labour fine spinning or coarse spinning, as the case may be—for it is a notable characteristic of the extent to which the principle of the division of labour has been carried that it not merely concentrates the same kind of labour in given localities, but the same qualities of work produced. The hands in one mill are threatened with a reduction of wages at the hands of an employer, who thinks he sees the way clear to a substantial increase in his profits. Why, is the natural question, should they work for less than their neighbours? When this state of feeling is once arrived at, and this question asked, you have potential trade unionism. One mill communicates with another, and the next thing is its actual existence. There is no resisting the contagious sense of united interest which is generated. Employers may like it or dislike it. It is the inevitable response on the part of the labourer to a sentiment which is quite as natural and quite as sure in some way or other to assert itself on the part of the capitalist. Society being subdivided as it now is, unionism and the spirit of unionism are its certain and necessary outcome.

How is this resultant force to be met? How is the crash of the collision between the two antagonistic interests to be removed? Just as in human nature the instinct of sympathy is the compensating principle to the instinct of selfishness, so in the



system of trade and industry do arbitration and conciliation act as the counterpoise of unionism. In arbitration, as it is perpetually exercised in industrial England, there may be found a practical fulfilment of the "*Conseil des Prud'hommes*." Twenty years ago the idea was first suggested by Mr. A. J. Mundella, a little later was actively espoused by Mr. Rupert Kettle and Mr. David Dale, and after twenty years of trial it may be pronounced a fact. It was, indeed, at first equally opposed by masters and men. Mutual jealousies and embitterments threatened permanently to bar the way to anything like friendly settlement and peaceful compromises, nor was it till after the report of the Trades Union Commission that the experiment made any very marked degree of progress. Since then the new idea that trade disputes can be settled without resort to the internecine war of strikes by mediation and argument has strongly possessed the working man of England, till now it may fairly be said that the strike, instead of being the first expedient to employ for obtaining industrial rights, is regarded as a last resort. It is to be remarked that it is of the essence of this scheme that conciliation and arbitration should go hand in hand, that the conference between the representatives of the two interests should not wait till the struggle has actually asserted itself, but that periodical meetings, whenever occasion may seem to render them desirable, should be held between associated workmen and associated employers. The most intelligent of the unionists

perceive that many of their laws have been thoroughly bad, unjust, and therefore impolitic both in their results to labour and their political bearing. The wisest of the unionist teachers, on the platform and in the press, do not fail boldly to point out where the defects of such laws are, and what must be their consequences. Thus the regulations and conditions of unionism have been gradually brought into something more like accord with economic laws, and the tendency has been established to regard the natural relations between employed and employer, not as a state of suppressed war ultimately to be decided on the starving-out principle, in which full freedom to fight to the bitter end was the privilege and the right of either combatant, but as a condition in which there is much real identity of interests, while apparent differences can be adjusted without any abrupt declaration of hostilities.

The progressive development of this idea can be traced geographically. It asserted itself successively at the three great centres of the iron trade: first, among the Cleveland, or the northern iron-workers; secondly, among the Staffordshire iron-workers; thirdly, among the iron-workers of South Yorkshire. In the case of the northern iron-works its results have been visible upon a very conspicuous scale. Actively adopted by the exceedingly intelligent operatives in this district ten years ago, it has stood the test of the two extremes of uncommon commercial prosperity and depression. Since its adoption it is to be noticed that

there has been no repetition of the desolating strikes, such as in 1865 created misery and havoc throughout the district for the space of eleven months. In every bad strike of recent years the men have either asked for arbitration, or a resolution in favour of arbitration has never been met by a counter-resolution. Thus in the South Wales strike of 1873 the men implored arbitration, and the fact is the more significant seeing that it was the employers who ultimately lost the battle. Again, in the masons' strike of 1877 there was the same undoubted desire for arbitration; while it was believed by the best authorities that the Lancashire cotton strikes of 1878 could have been entirely prevented if the proper machinery for arbitration had existed, for if the machinery is to be effective in time of trial, it must be because it has been carefully prepared in time of peace.

As regards the masons' strike of 1877 in London, one of its least agreeable features was the violence offered by the English workmen to those whom the masters had imported from the Continent. Hence the inference was drawn that the English workman was animated by a fierce desire not to tolerate the presence of a foreign rival upon any consideration, and that the demand was for the protection of native industry at any cost. Yet examples of British and foreign working men plying their tasks in perfect peace and harmony side by side are not rare, and it may be doubted whether the outrageous manner in which the London masons resented the presence of the new

comers was inspired by any deeper feeling than irritation at the beginning of a new order, or genuinely British prejudice against the stranger and the alien. The cry of protection to native industry has been raised, but there is no prospect of its becoming the watchword of a really great organisation. The English working man is in these matters much as his social superior. He does not like foreigners in the mass, and he is particularly jealous of the introduction of any individual foreigner. But after a time he accepts the inevitable. The multiplied opportunities of higher and technical education which he enjoys render him the more disposed to do this. The lectures on various subjects connected with art and industry given in our great towns—many of them local centres of university teaching—the various other agencies of secondary education, the study not only of books but of the contents of art museums, have largely extended the industrial purview of the English working man, have been as the key which has unlocked to him a new world, and are gradually impressing upon him the possibility and expediency of increasing the value of the labour of his hands by the application to it of the finish and graces of art, and of thus utilising art as a new source of industrial wealth.

Of the political questions which periodically agitate the working classes, there are three that may here be mentioned. The working man likes the idea of a big England rather than a small, for he sees in it the assertion of the dignity and power of his country on

a scale worthy of its historical antecedents, and he sees in it also a long vista of increased opportunities for his class. It is an idea which gratifies his pride as a patriot, and commends itself to his interests as a labourer. But there is something that is of more immediate concern to him than a big England. Trade and labour—such is the burden of his complaint—are too generally ignored by the whole body of Parliament. Why does not, he sometimes asks, the Government create a Minister of Commerce—a portfolio whose holder shall be specially charged with the transaction and the superintendence of whatever affects the well-being of trade, commerce, capital, and labour? Again, how long, he inquires, will labour continue to be handicapped by the unequal burdens which the repudiation of free trade by America, by the great nations of continental Europe, by the chief of our own colonies, imposes? If it is asked how far the working classes sincerely look to Parliament to remedy these and other grievances, the answer is not quite easy to give. There is undoubtedly a disposition on the part of working men of many shades and varieties of political thought to promote the movement for the direct representation of the interests of labour in the House of Commons. But it cannot be said that working men are fundamentally agreed as to the probable efficacy of this scheme. On the contrary, working men do not as a rule seem to believe in working-men members of Parliament. They are also apt to be somewhat jealous of leaders who

belong to their own number. If their man gets into Parliament they are troubled with a misgiving that he will in some undefined way or other be "got at;" that he will not be permitted to vote "straight;" that social pressure will be brought to bear upon him; that he may prove a renegade to the good cause. Yet the dream still vaguely flits before the vision of our English workmen of sending to Parliament a number of representatives who shall form a labour party at Westminster, just as there is already a Home Rule party.

When one comes to the personality of the English working man in towns, one is met not only by the fact which has been already noticed—the multitude of typical varieties—but by the noticeable difference between the working man as he exists in London and in the provinces. One great distinction is that, whereas in the majority of instances the provincial working man leader is more or less prominently identified with some form of religion, the leaders of the London working men are more often professed secularists. Taking the industrial classes of England as a whole, there is no reason to think that the influence of religion is declining amongst them. Whatever may be their own professions, they have no idea of educating their children in infidelity, and when mortal sickness comes, they will ask the ministration of some church or other for themselves. Mr. Bradlaugh and other "free thought" lecturers fail to command in the provinces anything like the audiences they secure in London. On the other hand, whereas a lecture on political economy, or some

other subject of commercial or industrial interest, would be listened to by two or three thousand eager hearers in Blackburn or Preston, Sheffield or Manchester, it would be addressed to little better than an array of empty benches in the capital of the empire. Generally it may be said that in the matter of religion, as in so many others, the working classes reflect the condition of their superiors. If there is more active aggressive disbelief in England at the present time than formerly, there is also more active and genuine religion. It is the profession of disbelief which is quite as characteristic of this age as the spread of disbelief. Sides are actively taken where once the spirit of partisanship was dominant, and the battle of the creeds is fought where formerly the belligerents were lulled in an indolent neutrality.

The London working man possesses many of the best points of his order, while at the same time he has not a few of their failings. He is proud of living in the metropolis of the kingdom. He is sensible of a geographical superiority over his provincial brethren. He is very often ludicrously self-conscious and grotesquely vain. He is, at the same time, exceedingly plausible, and not less shallow—quick to perceive those features in any subject of the day which are calculated to affect him most, and in answering questions, skilful in making his replies subservient to the interest of his own case, and very careful to conceal all which he considers can in any way tell against that case. In matters relative to organisation he is, as we have already seen, at a great disadvantage

as compared with his provincial brother. The immense number of industries collected together in London, the corporate feeling of the men engaged in which is exceedingly strong, go far to neutralise each other. In addition to the diversity of employments a further force of segregation is due to the distance at which those engaged in them live from the scene of their labour, and above all to the competing attraction of the legion of popular amusements.

Another cardinal distinction between the working man in London and the working man in the provinces is that in the former he is almost always a lodger, and in the latter, with very few exceptions, a householder. At Sheffield, or Birmingham, or in any of the manufacturing towns or mining districts, it would be considered scarcely creditable to the workman, unless he was a bachelor, if he did not inhabit a house of his own. Built of red brick or grey stone, these houses are for the most part kept astonishingly neat and clean, and it is seldom that evil odours assail one's nostrils, except when the dwelling is in the heart of one of those rookeries which are now gradually disappearing. Frequently, too, the lodging of the London workman is as well ordered as the home of his provincial brother. In some of the London suburbs—such as Chelsea or Kensington—it is no uncommon thing to call upon the mason or joiner who is making thirty shillings a week, and to find him settled in the basement of a roomy house, let out into lodgings, the window of his sitting-room commanding a view of



a fernery improvised in the area, which is made picturesque with flowers and evergreens. But even thus the domestic sentiment has but slight force amongst the working classes of London, in comparison with that which it exercises in the country. Music-halls and other entertainments are as popular amongst the working men of London as they are the reverse with the better stamp of working men out of it, and these distractions render the concentration of the working classes in London, upon any given occasion and for any given purpose, exceedingly difficult. To post on the hoardings of London enough bills to reach the bulk of the working population would cost over £100, and the consequence is that the attempt is very seldom made. Hence one of the reasons why co-operation, which has succeeded so well in the great towns of the north, has never proved successful amongst the working classes of London. Frequent periodical meetings, during its earlier days, and continued concentration of interest afterwards, are necessary for the success of such an enterprise. These are just what cannot be had in London, where the complaint is that the working classes cannot be got to act together and keep together. On the other hand, there is perhaps more sociality and good fellowship amongst the working classes in London than in the country, though the institutions of the Sunday dinner and Sunday tea, both of them eminently characteristic of the English working classes, are common both to London and the provinces. The former of these is a function of some

importance. It is the culinary event of the week. There are better dishes, and some variety of them; the furniture of the table and the manners of the company—for two or three friends are invariably invited—are of a corresponding order of superiority. Tea is a meal less ceremonious, but equally important in its way, since it is found by experience to furnish the chosen opportunity of the matrimonial diplomatist.

## CHAPTER XI.

### THE WORKING CLASSES (*continued*).

General View of Changes and Improvements in the Condition of the Agricultural Labourer—Type of the English Peasant—His Career traced from Cradle to Grave—His Daily Life—Different Kinds of Farm Labourers—Meals and Food of the Class—Various Specimens of Peasant Population in English Villages—Changes which have come over Village Life—The Co-operative Store—The Dawn of Knowledge—How the English Peasantry are Domiciled—Scandals removed and Evils remaining—Allotments: their Uses and Danger—Different Modes of Hire and Manners of Payment of Rural Population—Hiring of Families—Labour of Women—General System and Progress of Agriculture in England—Mutual Relation of Tenant Farmers and Landlords—Property of Tenant Farmers—Wages of Agricultural Class—Improvement and Fluctuations—General Position and Prosperity of the Rural Working Population.

THE combined influences of science and commerce have scarcely more transformed the surface of the earth than modern rural improvements, whether they have had their origin in legislative sanction or in a growing sense of the responsibilities of ownership, have changed the moral and physical aspects of the country villages of England. That neat new building, with the courtyard round it, and a compact as well as picturesque dwelling-house in a carefully cultivated garden hard by, is the new village school. Many thousands of these structures dot the length and breadth of rural England. Well ventilated and well equipped with school furniture, maps, and educational apparatus generally, they answer other purposes than that of being places for the instruction

of boys and girls during the day. It is as likely as not that night classes are held in them throughout the winter months for the benefit of the unlettered adults. The secular village school on week-days is probably the religious school on Sundays. Lectures, penny readings, and concerts will also be held within the same precincts. The school is often the assembly-room of the district, as well as the symbol and the centre of its intellectual enlightenment. Nor is the improving hand of time seen less plainly upon the cottages round about. The peasant's home is gradually ceasing to be the human sty in which for generations he dwelt. The squalid cottages, constructed and inhabited in defiance of every known sanitary principle, are disappearing, and their places are being taken by neat rows of brick houses, mostly built in sets of two, each being nearly the exact counterpart of the other, with kitchen, pantry, and sitting-room on the ground floor, and above three well-ventilated bed-rooms; a yard behind, and in it a small out-house for the stowage of fuel. In no part of England does the rent of these cottages probably exceed 3s. a week. In the rural districts of East Anglia it is rarely on large estates more than 1s. 6d. a week, and never more than 2s. In addition to his house and garden—the latter yielding enough vegetable produce for the family—our labourer may perhaps have within an easy distance of his dwelling an allotment of a quarter of an acre, held on a rental, it may be, of 10s. a year. Here he grows more vegetables, or maintains a cow or a donkey upon the pasturage of the soil. Such

allotments frequently adjoin each other, and it is a sight not unknown in some more favoured districts to watch, on Sunday evening, the tenants of these slips of ground walking round their property and inspecting its condition with evident satisfaction and pride.

The regular hours of day labour are ten, and as half an hour is deducted for breakfast, a working day consists of  $9\frac{1}{2}$  hours. In the haymaking season and harvest-time, when extra pay is given, or the work is put out by the piece, the hours are longer. In winter eight hours, and in some cases only seven, represent the daily average of toil. The diet of the cottager and his family consists chiefly of bread, potatoes, bacon, and cheese. He has usually had a cup of tea and a piece of bread, with bacon as a relish, before he leaves home in the morning. At his early dinner he has vegetables and pickled meat, and if you enter his cottage about the hour of supper, your nostrils will detect a savoury appetising smell, and your ears will catch the suggestive sound of frying. In many parts of England, notably in the north and in the midlands, there has been a sensible improvement in the last few years in the art of rustic cookery. The wives and daughters of the clergy and resident gentry have done much towards carrying the principles of scientific cookery into the homes of the poor, by giving friendly lessons and hints, by writing out receipts for them, and practically illustrating their execution on the occasion of their periodical visits. Nor must the beneficent influences of the spread of cheap and instructive publications be forgotten. "Hints

on Cookery" are a regular feature in the journals which make their way into the dwellings of the rural poor.

That the reader may easily learn who and what manner of man the English country working man is, it may be well personally to introduce him without further delay upon the stage, to accompany him not merely through his ordinary round of daily toil, but also through the successive vicissitudes of his career from infancy till old age. Here then, let it be supposed, he stands before us, long ere he has arrived at the threshold of his actively working existence—a sturdy little urchin, with face reddened and browned by the combined influences of wind and sun. The distinctively rural dress which children in agricultural districts once used to wear is seldom seen now. The small boy we are looking on is not clad in the rough smock with which we were formerly familiar, but in a suit consisting of a little round jacket and knickerbockers, bought at the market town. His sister, who is at his side, wears a costume which has equally little that is specially Arcadian about it, and which is composed of a cheap material made up after the London fashion. The great ambition of this small girl will be, before her schooling days are over, to go into domestic service, and then to find a husband in some gentleman's footman, or butler, attaining finally to the dignity of landlady of some country-town inn, or thriving public-house. For the boy a different future is reserved. At the present moment he is, let us say, eight or nine years of age, and in

the old days, before Education Acts were heard of, he would have been already at work as a bird-tender, or scarer in the fields. He would have grown up utterly unlearned and illiterate, but before he was twelve he would have mastered many a valuable lesson from the book of nature ; would have the names of all the horses employed on the farm, and the peculiarities and strength of each, by heart ; would have become an authority on the homes and habits of the birds of the air and the beasts of the field ; would have been able to tell at a distance that defied the penetrative power of ordinary eyes, the spot on which the hare was crouching, or the bird had settled. Night schools and Sunday schools might have taught him something, but if he grew up to manhood tintured with the simplest rudiments of reading and writing he was esteemed a paragon, and spoken of as a "rare fine scholar."

All this is changed now. Our future agricultural labourer is prevented by law from being sent to work at all before he is ten years of age, and the tendency of School Boards and Boards of Guardians, who in some rural districts have practically the powers of School Boards, is to impose as a qualifying condition of work a standard not only of age, but of attainments. On every day of the week, except Saturday and Sunday, he is, or ought to be, at school from 9 a.m. to 12 noon, and from 2 to 4.30 p.m. At Christmas there are two weeks of holidays, and during harvest-time a month or more, in order that the children may assist in the ingathering

of the grain. When he commences life as an agricultural labourer, it will probably be not in the capacity of scarer—bird-scaring is now generally done by inanimate scarecrows—but of driver of horses, or plough-boy. In some parts of England he will during the stage of his apprenticeship lodge upon the farm - where he is employed, receiving perhaps £13 a year in addition to board and living. For the most part he will not be resident under the actual roof of his employer, but will be placed in the cottage of the hind, who receives 8s. 6d. a week from his employer. In the performance of these duties he will continue for some years—not the less fortunate if he does not happen to be promoted out of the ordinary routine of a farm servant's duties. Indeed, the ordinary day-labourer on an English farm, who is expected to put his hand to any work which may present itself, is, by comparison, the best paid, as he is also the most independent, of all agricultural workmen. The shepherd is really never off duty at all. He is liable to be summoned from his sleep at any hour of the night, and when he is once out he knows not when he may expect to return. The carter, too, is up and about betimes with the first grey of the summer dawn, and long before the stars have disappeared from the heavens on the winter mornings. Again, the milkman has to be at his post with undeviating regularity when the day is in its infancy throughout the year. Each of these labourers has probably left home breakfastless, and has been busy for two or three hours -



before the rank and file of the farmer's staff are astir; if they have broken their fast it has merely been with a piece of bread, and perhaps a drink of cold tea or of milk-and-water, but the general hands are not necessarily bound to these hardships. There is nothing in the hour at which their duties begin to prevent them having had a satisfying meal before they have left home.

But we are anticipating the development of our typical labourer. He has now reached the age of two or three and twenty. He stands five feet eight inches in his shoes; he is spare but well knit of figure, healthy in look, and singularly deliberate in manner and mien. The English agricultural labourer, indeed, is never known to be in a hurry. His costume is corduroy or fustian; probably he wears knee-gaiters; a cotton handkerchief is tied round his neck; his head is surmounted by a slouch hat; and his boots are of immense thickness, studded with heavy nails. Such is his external person, which has sufficiently commended itself to some village maiden to secure for him a wife. Even if he be a little younger than two or three and twenty, the chances are that he is married, and has a home of his own. Nor does his home see much more of him than those of many professional gentlemen. At six he is up, and busied with preparing for himself such breakfast as he can snatch. At half-past six he is off, carrying, perhaps, in a basket or handkerchief his provisions for the day—a loaf of white bread (the quality of the loaf of the agricultural

labourer is remarkably good, and it is a maxim with his wife that "the better it is the farther it goes"), a piece of bacon or beef, a little cheese or butter, and a bottle of cold tea. He will either proceed to his work direct—to the stables, or to the business of hedging and ditching, as the case may be—or will have an interview with the farmer, or the farm bailiff, whose business it is to allot the day's labour to the different members of the staff, and will work on till nine a.m. Then comes the first break, and a second breakfast from the treasures of his basket. At noon he will devote another spell of rest to the consumption of dinner, the materials of which he either finds in the basket already mentioned or receives from home, sent by the hands of his children—one of the urchins already mentioned—for it is seldom that he goes home till work is done. The meal over, comes a pipe or a nap, or possibly both, and at 1.30 p.m. he is busy again. Four hours pass, the business of the day is over, and the agricultural labourer turns homeward, bent on supper, which is "the one real family meal of the day."\*

First, however, he will, we may expect, look round his garden, and perhaps do a little piece of work, or examine the fattening progress of his pig. Thus engaged, he receives the summons to the supper-table. The children have already taken their places. Possibly he

\* So called by Mr. H. J. Little, of Coldhouse Hall, Wisbeach, to whom I am indebted for many facts in the account here given of the agricultural labourer. See "Journal of the Royal Agricultural Society," vol. xiv., 1878.

has a daughter home from service as a guest, who will contribute out of her wages to the domestic treasury. Under any circumstances, if times are fairly prosperous and the household is tolerably well managed, the meal will be substantial. There will be mutton and vegetables, or beef—not a prime cut, but, still, eatable and nourishing—for the master of the household and the elders, or a mess of bacon and potatoes, or a savoury mixture of chopped meat, sage, and onions, and whatever other vegetables the garden produces. As for the children, they will have pudding, and bread and treacle, or bread and dripping. When this, which is really the late dinner, is disposed of, our agricultural labourer may, if it be summer, and he is not completely fagged out, do a stroke of work more in his garden; or if he take an interest in the news of the day, or rather of several days ago, dip into the local journal, or else have the print read aloud to him. If he is less domesticated there is the public-house, a fascinating attraction which hard toiling humanity cannot always resist. But there is less intoxication and disorderly conduct than formerly, and there is also the frequently successful competition of the village club. The hay and wheat harvest are the great events of the year, and the most profitable seasons of his industry. Then he is up early and out in the fields till late. His children are near him at work too. Money passes into the domestic exchequer, and his financial year comes to an end when the last wagon-load of wheat is conveyed to

the threshing-floor. The bills which his social betters liquidate at Christmas he defrays at harvest-tide, if he has received credit from any local tradesmen. Thus the year runs its course, and as it is with one year so is it with its successor. His children grow up, are put to school, go out to work if they are boys, marry in their turn, and set up for themselves; go into service if they are girls, or take employment in the native industries of the town hard by, or with the sewing machine. To bring up his family well is the greatest merit which the English agricultural labourer can claim. Even when this has been done years of work may yet be before him. Nor, as old age grows upon him, will he be helpless. He can still do odd jobs. He is in receipt of an annuity from the benefit society. He is not likely to be neglected by the squire or the parson. "If he can possibly manage it," says Mr. Little, "he now contrives to put a trifle by for the decent performance of the last offices connected with his earthly career; but if this be impracticable, it does not give him much concern that the parish will be called upon to pay a portion of these expenses. His wages have not been excessive, and if his old employers have once more to put their hands in their pockets on his account, it is only a just fulfilment of his final dues. So, not without a touch of sardonic philosophy, he passes away."

Independently of his comparative indifference to much that is to the town artisan invested with

paramount interest, there are several respects in which the country working man differs from his urban brother. As regards house-room and lodging, he enjoys the advantage conferred by the quit-rent system of staying on in his cottage while he is out of work, and of thus gaining an interval for looking about him. The village fair, or harvest-home festival, or benefit feast, are the chief breaks in the continual routine of work. Cricket clubs and football clubs are, indeed, increasing in number and popularity, but these are pastimes which are not carried on much after early manhood. He differs, also, from the town workman in knowing less of the pleasures of the regular holidays. Of the Saturday half-holiday of town workers he knows little or nothing. Sunday, indeed, is with the peasant emphatically a day of rest. He may or he may not go to church or chapel, arrayed in solemn black, or else in a waistcoat and neck-tie of gorgeous colours; but whether he performs or neglects this duty, he will sedulously refrain from all kinds of occupation—unless he is employed in connection with the live stock—and if he saunters about will remain all day within a stone's throw of his cottage.

If the majority of English rural villages have as their inhabitants a labouring population such as that of which a specimen has just been given, and if these workers for the most part conform to the type that we have delineated, there are certain exceptions in the English village system, certain stock deviations in

individual character from the normal standard, which may be briefly glanced at. In many English villages there may be found groups of cottages which constitute a settlement of some distinct class, or aggregate of families, that have lived on there from generation to generation, and of whose legal claim to the spot nothing is known. It is a sort of no-man's-land, and the human beings who have fixed themselves upon it lead an anomalous, precarious, and rather predatory life. They work for the farmers during the hay and wheat harvest, but for the rest of the year they subsist visibly on the produce of their not too well tended gardens. In reality, they must have other resources than these. The men of the settlement are more than suspected of being habitual poachers, and the women and children have the stigma resting on them of being systematic practitioners of various kinds of petty larceny. Even if it cannot boast the presence of these aboriginal squatters, the English village is seldom without some special characteristics of its own. Thus, in addition to the chronic drunkard who already shows signs of softening of the brain, there may almost always be found among the population the clever, active labourer, who, after having worked with great regularity and success for weeks together, has a fit of drinking, and disappears for two or three days.

Then there is usually to be found the incorrigible scamp of the community, who never did an honest day's work in his life, whom farmers would be reluctant to employ, who is an abomination to the

squire, and who is even considered past reclamation by the parson. The more reputable village inn closes its door against him, but there is a low beer-house—a sink of mischief and of iniquity—of which he is a regular customer. He could tell how the landlord of that establishment contrived to get so many luxuries—fish, flesh, fowl, and vegetable—into the filthy back-kitchen of the den, sempiternally reeking with the fumes of bad drink and vile tobacco. He is seldom to be seen abroad in the village in the full light of day, but he prowls about at nightfall, as if bent upon some sinister purpose. He is a master in the art of tickling trout, and of snaring pheasants; he is, in fact, the recognised village poacher, who has hitherto by marvellous good luck escaped the clutch of the law. Justice, however, overtakes him at last, or if it fails to overtake him in the village whose pest he is, it is only because he shuns its approach, and contrives to flee while yet there is time.

We have already noted in the dress of the men and children of rural England the abandonment of the distinctly agricultural garb. Something even more noticeable still is the change which has taken place in the dress of the women. Even in those parts of England where, as in Northumberland, much out-door labour, especially in the fields during harvest-time, is done by mothers and daughters, the clothes worn approximate with remarkable closeness to the prevailing urban fashion of the period. Dress and musical airs seem to travel only a little less quickly than ill tidings.

The new ditties which the pantomimes popularise in London are dispersed throughout the provinces by itinerant organ-grinders before many months or weeks are over. It is the same with feminine apparel. The last new mode finds its way to the neighbouring market town very nearly at the same time that it does to the capital of the empire ; and cheap bonnets of the latest shape, or ribbons of the approved tint, are displayed in the window of the village shop a very little while after they have been first exposed to the view of the buyers of Regent Street.

Nor is the village shop the only emporium of these goods. A conspicuous and salutary innovation in the economy of English villages in the course of the last few years has been the co-operative store. Rather more than a decade since, a certain small village in the midland counties, which will serve as a type of many others placed in similar circumstances, made a sudden jump towards prosperity. A hosiery manufactory was started ; it was a success, and gave profitable employment to wives and children of the tillers of the soil. There was plenty of money to spend, but the shops in the village were justly deemed not quite satisfactory. The place was fortunate in the possession of a clergyman who had a strong idea of reducing the rules of Christianity to practice, and who was a good man of business into the bargain. He took counsel with the farmers of the place, offered a few suggestions to the labourers and factory hands, and as a result of those deliberations and preparatory measures,



A— Industrial and Provident Society (Limited) was founded, and duly certified by the Registrar of Friendly Societies of England as having rules which were in conformity with the law. The capital of the society was raised in £1 shares, to which each member subscribed at the rate of threepence per week, or 3s. 6d. a quarter, until the whole sum was paid up. The business is carried on under the control of a committee of management of nine persons, a treasurer, a secretary, two auditors, and five arbitrators. It is conducted on the most rigid of ready money principles. The accounts are rendered and audited each quarter day. Some idea of its early progress may be formed from the statement that the society began business with thirty-three members, and a paid up capital of £27 2s. At the first quarterly meeting it consisted of twelve stockingers, thirteen agricultural labourers, one lock-keeper, one carpenter, one carrier, one brickmaker, one hawker, one retired tradesman, two farmers, and two clergymen. It boasted already a disposable balance of £3 4s. 4d. Seven years later the society numbered ninety-one members—amongst them twenty-four agricultural labourers, of whom two were the largest investors in the funds of the institution. The goods in stock were estimated at £216; £180 was invested at interest; there was a balance in the bank of £105; and every day the clergyman of the parish was receiving small sums from his parishioners to invest in the association. Of course the plant of the society had increased in value. A cottage adjoining the original warehouse had been

annexed for the purpose of additional storage. Seven acres of land were rented, and also a barn, where the crops were threshed. All the necessities, and some of the luxuries, of existence are for sale on this establishment, which is as much a feature in the village as the school: groceries, bread, butter, hosiery, haberdashery, stationery, drugs of all kinds, tobacco, and beer. The sale of ale was considered an experiment of doubtful value. It has proved an entire success. It has been accompanied by a marked diminution of drunkenness, and by the disappearance of the last remnants of the truck system.

This is only one instance of the new spirit which has so largely reformed and quickened the life of the country working man. Enter his house and you will see the æsthetic tendencies of the age illustrated in the decorations of his dwelling. There are familiar and sometimes graceful chromo-lithographs on the walls, there are ornaments on the mantelpiece, though very often these latter are of a far worse design, more vulgar in idea and tawdry of colour than they used to be. Books are not wanting, nor newspapers either; and, indeed, the extensive circulation of the daily and weekly news-sheets among the rural labourers of England is one of the signs of the times. It is no longer the rector of the parish, the squire, and the more important farmers, who receive daily the contemporary history of the world as recorded in the columns of the London or the larger provincial newspapers. These make their way into the smaller farmhouses and the

wayside inns. Means for their distribution have multiplied immensely during the last few years. The milk-carts, which make a journey twice in every twenty-four hours to the local town, are often called into requisition; and there is the parcel from the London agent, either dropped at the remote rural railway station, or, if there be no station in the neighbourhood, thrown out of the window of the train as it flies past, by the guard, at some fixed spot. It is no mere speculative interest in current events which has popularised the growth of journalism in the homes of the country poor. What chiefly interests the agricultural student of the hebdomadal press is that which seems specially to affect his personal condition. He would sooner have a smart attack on the policy of the Poor Law Guardians of his district than a slashing criticism on the conduct of diplomatic negotiations of incalculable moment. Similarly his literary appetite is whetted by a desire to know all that concerns the position and the prospects of his own industry. The agitation of labour *versus* capital has invested the columns of the newspaper with a fresh attraction, and the country working man is beginning to find a satisfaction in reading of emigrants and emigration, scarcely second to that which he might formerly have experienced in sensational reports of accidents and crimes. Book-hawking societies are another agency to which a word of grateful recognition is due. Once these are established on a broad basis they often flourish admirably with very little eleemosynary help.

In all this may be seen progress beneficent, considerable, and well defined, in the condition of the agricultural labourer. But there are evils which have no more ceased to be his lot than misery, sin, want, starvation, and disease have died out of the land. Granted that legislation has done something, that the measures which followed upon the inquiry of the Agricultural Commission of 1867, the Truck Acts, and modern sanitary laws, have provided a machinery for ameliorating the condition of the rural labourer, against which there is, from a theoretical point of view, nothing to be said; how, it may be asked, does the machinery work? Because the labour of children below a certain age, and without a certificate that they have satisfied a fixed educational standard, is forbidden, does it therefore follow that no such children are employed? Because there is no corner of England which is not subject to a recognised authority, is our worship of the goddess Hygeia a universal act of practical homage? If some landlords would no sooner tolerate the existence of the causes of pestilence in the homes of their poor than they would a public nuisance in their own parks, are we therefore to conclude that the Arcadian glimpses given above of the labourer's cottage are typically faithful revelations of the average state of its interior? The true answer to these questions is that the tendency of the times is in the direction of social and sanitary reform. What is now generally wanted on the large estates is not so much an improvement in the kind of cottages as an

increase of their number. It was one of the hardships of the rural labourer that he had a considerable distance to walk to his work. Houses, therefore, have, in many cases, been built on the spot or near the farmstead. The labourers now frequently object to live in them, and prefer the independence and sociability of the village. They dislike the rules of the estate, which prohibit lodgers overcrowding, and which insist on the ventilators being kept open. The women complain of solitude—they are not near enough to the shop; the men of dulness—they are too far from the public-house. The report of the Commission of 1867 made it tolerably clear that the habit of letting cottages in connection with the farms was decidedly mischievous in its operation. “I am clearly of opinion,” says the Rev. Lord S. Godolphin Osborne, “that the landlord should hold all the cottages in his own hands, under his own direct control.” “In all my inquiries,” says Mr. Edward Stanhope, “on this point, I never yet met a man who preferred to live ‘under a farmer,’ as they call it. The apparent advantage in point of income enjoyed by a man in Dorset who is a yearly servant, and lives in a house attached to the farm, is great, and yet even there the labourer had the strongest objection to the system. With great reluctance I have been forced to the conclusion that there is no system more fatal to the independence and comfort of labourers than that of letting cottages with the farms.” On the other hand it would scarcely do to make the occupancy of the cottages entirely independent of the tenure of the farm, and the farmer

would certainly find it highly inconvenient to have men living on his premises who were not working for him. Substantial as are the improvements which have taken place in the condition of the cottages of the agricultural labourers since the Commission of 1867 concluded its investigations, the report of that body is not yet an entirely obsolete document. The first great defect in the cottages of rural England is now, as it was then, the absence of proper bed-room accommodation. Many of these houses contain only one sleeping-room; more, only two. In a village of the midland counties, the writer has himself become cognisant of the fact of there being crowded nightly into a single sleeping-room the mother—a widow—a young man of nineteen—her son—her daughter, and the illegitimate child of the latter. Frequently, the site chosen for the cottage is some damp, marshy place; or the building is erected with its back hard against a hill, or on ground probably a foot or two below the surface of the surrounding soil, and without any attempt at drainage or ventilation. Nor is a less dire evil to be seen in the pollution of the atmosphere outside the doors, not so much or necessarily because the drainage is defective as because the women are unable to see that there is any harm in permitting heaps of rotting vegetables and other refuse to accumulate in the little garden; generally, indeed, the English working classes in agricultural districts have not the slightest knowledge of the most elementary laws of health, and if education in

these was included in the course of the village school a good work would be done.

Of course, existing sanitary laws ought to prevent much of this. But the difficulty of enforcing them is extreme, and their full execution would often invoke wholesale eviction. Nor would the cost of eviction end where it began. There is a clause in the Sanitary Act empowering the shutting up of cottages in the outskirts of a town. If acted upon, the clause would result in the overcrowding of houses in towns, for the legislation has this further deficiency, that it does not authorise the building of fresh houses in the place of those which are practically demolished. A great complaint against the Act is that there is nothing to set in motion, and hence it has been compared to "a watch without a mainspring." Dr. Fraser, Bishop of Manchester, one of the Commissioners of Agriculture in 1867, remarked, "The existing Sanitary Act is quite ineffective, owing to the local influence by which it is hampered," and suggested the appointment of an independent officer like an excise-man. That the Act should have failed, may be accounted for in a great degree by the fact that the authorities are elected by the ratepayers and the representatives of ratepayers, who are for the most part busy men. No doubt, a further extension of State action has evils, and tends towards pauperisation. But if there is no reason why Boards of Guardians should not be empowered to pay the school fees of children whose parents are helplessly poor, and if the receipt of

such assistance does not constitute pauperism, why should it be stigmatised as "pauperisation" if a man receive State aid in order to make his house habitable by his family?

The consequences of such a state of things—of which the end has yet to be seen—are from a physical, social, economical, moral, or intellectual point of view, equally disastrous. "Physically," to quote Dr. Fraser's report, "a ruinous, ill-drained, overcrowded cottage generates any amount of disease, as well as intensifies tendency to scrofula and phthisis. Socially, nothing can be more wretched than the condition of 'open' parishes, into which have been poured remorselessly the scum and off-scour of their 'close'\* neighbours. Economically, the imperfect distribution of cottages deprives the farmer of a large portion of his effective labour-power. The employer who has no cottages to offer those whom he employs must either attract labourers by the offer of higher wages, or must content himself with refuse." Morally, what is to be expected but that, as Dr. Fraser writes, "modesty must be an unknown virtue, decency an unimaginable thing, where in one small chamber, with the beds lying as

\* One of the consequences of the new Poor Law has been that the distinction between close and open villages has to a great extent disappeared. Villages are called close when they are the exclusive property of a single owner; open, when there is a plurality of ownership. Under the old Poor Law, when every village was charged with the support of its own poor, the landlord had naturally an object in admitting as few potential paupers into his village as possible, and, therefore, kept down the number of his cottages, but after, by the Act of 1834, the support of the poor was charged upon Union areas, the motive for the preservation of the close village system disappeared.



thickly as they can be packed, father, mother, young men, lads, grown-up girls—two, and sometimes three generations—are herded promiscuously. “We complain,” continues the report, “of the ante-nuptial unchastity of our women, of the loose talk and conduct of the girls who work in the fields, of the light way in which maidens part with their honour, and how seldom either a parent’s or a brother’s blood boils with shame—*here*, in cottage herding, is the sufficient account and history of all.”

That many of these evils still exist—are likely, for the matter of that, to exist for a long while—amongst us must be admitted. But there is a reverse side to the picture, which has been indicated at the beginning of the present chapter, and which is equally historic fact. It may be that more legislation is wanted; it may be that the action of the legislation which at present exists is not as certain or speedy as could be desired. But, for all that, there is movement, and that movement is pre-eminently in the right direction. The low mud and straw-thatched tenement, with its two rooms on the ground floor, has to a very great extent disappeared. The responsibilities of proprietorship have been recognised, and the very circumstance that the possession of land in England is valued quite as much for the power it confers as for the revenue which it yields—“almost in all cases,” as Mr. Little remarks, “a very poor return upon the capital invested”—is a favourable influence. Landlords are, for the most

part, ambitious of the reputation of having good cottages on their estate, and the rivalry of the landlords is reflected in the competition of their agents. Nor is it less fortunate, from this point of view, that properties have gradually passed, and are still passing, out of the hands of impoverished landlords into those of the owners of estates which are principalities, or into the hands of the wealthy members of the mercantile community. Again, if it be admitted that the law is still short of what it ought to be, we must remember that indirectly it has done much. The abolition of the old Poor Law, and its replacement by a system under which the landlord is no longer only charged with the relief of the poor in his own village—no longer obtains a portion of his rental at the expense of his neighbours—has convinced him of the expediency of generally improving their state.

But it must be remembered that, valuable as the reform is, it is not necessarily an unalloyed benefit to the agricultural poor. It is a great thing that the peasant should inhabit a commodious, comfortable building of brick and slate, consisting of kitchen, parlour, and pantry on the ground floor, and three well-ventilated bed-rooms above, instead of the mud hovels of old, with their two rooms not removed above the level of the soil. The cost, however, of such a structure as this is not much, if at all, less than £280 ; and, seeing that the rental is not more than £5 a year, it is obvious that the owner is left with a loss. If he is to make the loss good, he must recoup himself out of the

rent paid by the farmer ; and the advantage conferred upon the latter is represented by the fact that he has his labourer close to his farm, and in good health instead of in bad.

Let us now quit the actual dwelling of the agricultural labourer, and see how he is situated immediately outside it. We have already watched him engaged in the cultivation of his garden or allotment, or else in gazing on it on Sunday afternoon. At once it must be said that, as regards the relative value to the peasant of gardens and allotments, some difference of opinion exists. With a garden of thirty roods of ordinary land, it was decidedly the opinion of the Bishop of Manchester, when a member of the Agricultural Commission of 1867, that a labourer would scarcely care about an allotment, probably at some distance from his cottage. The garden, he points out, is close under his eye, and can occupy many spare ten minutes of the man's time. It is easily manured, and "there is a reciprocal and a beneficial connection between it and the sty: the garden half keeps the pig, and the pig in turn more than half keeps the garden." On the other hand, it is beyond question that the allotment system is one which has proved full of benefit, and especially in particular districts. In Dorsetshire, where wages have been exceptionally low, the labourers occupy an amount of land which provides employment for the whole family. "The redeeming feature," says Mr. Stanhope, "of rural life here is the amount of land held by the labouring class ; indeed,

but for this the wages would sometimes hardly be sufficient to support life." One thing is quite certain, that if extended beyond a limited size, allotments are the source of danger and of loss to the peasant, and practically create the evil which they are designed to remedy. In some parts of England, what is known as Fergus O'Connor's Act is still operative. Where this is the case—as, for instance, in the west of England, near Yeovil—there may be seen a row of some half-dozen cottages, each with two or three acres of land attached. These were designed for the benefit of the agricultural labourer. As a matter of fact, they were almost all occupied by small tradesmen. If the allotment be just big enough to take up a man's odd time, it will be an immense boon; if, on the other hand, he devotes himself entirely to it, he may prosper for a season, but he will find that in the long run he cannot hold his own, and he will feel acutely the want of the weekly wage, paid more or less regularly every Saturday. When it is talked about creating a race of peasant proprietors, such as those who exist in France, it is forgotten or ignored that the English peasant is not like the French peasant, has not the same innate faculty of thrift, cannot live on the same simple, unsubstantial fare. The land, too, if it is to be made to pay, requires to be manured, and the labourer is not in a position to possess himself of this mode of artificial fertilisation. Again, in the case of a miniature farm of two or three acres, no provision can be made for the necessary alternation of crops; consequently the land

is exhausted, while even if the cottager succeed in growing upon it a pretty regular supply of vegetables, he will find it impossible to guarantee a sufficiency of regular customers. The only way in which, as experience shows, the labourer who looks to live entirely by his allotment can hope to be successful is by having his home in the immediate neighbourhood of some town, where he can sell his produce and command a tolerably regular succession of gardens to look after, carpets to beat, and odd jobs to do.

There remain to be considered various other circumstances to a great extent affecting the condition of the agricultural labourer. The consideration of their wages may be reserved to the end of the chapter, while of the mode of their payment only a few words need be said. In Northumberland they are paid in kind. Generally labourers are unwilling to forego their privilege of taking part of wages in beer and cider. The following anecdote illustrates the dominion which drink can thus obtain over a man's mind. A labourer having earned at a piece of task-work a considerable sum of money, left off for several days, and during that time was incessantly drinking. One morning, when all his money had been expended, he set off to resume his work at a distance of three miles from his home. On reaching the place, he took off his coat and threw it on the ground, but as it fell, a forgotten sixpence dropped out of his pocket, upon which he put it on again, and walked back the three miles to finish the sixpence before he would begin work.

Though it is to secondary remedies such as a keener sense of self-interest, and to the creation of a public feeling unfavourable to the vice, that we must look for the ultimate and sole effective guarantee against drunkenness, there are certain primary measures which might obviously be tried. Again and again has it been pointed out that public-houses are apparently allowed to multiply far beyond the legitimate needs of the community. The police state that those licensed under the new system, *i.e.*, where beer cannot be drunk on the premises, are worse to deal with than those where customers can go in and drink. Much may be said in favour of giving the licensing power to the magistrates. If it continues to reside with the Excise, the standard of the qualifications in the ratepayers who sign the petition for the licence might be raised till it was something like a guarantee of character. Meanwhile it may be well to point out that the farmers themselves, much as they condemn the beer-house system, are apt in their good nature to encourage in their men a taste for liquor, by remunerating extra jobs in drink; supplementing wages by beer and cider. Women and the ordinary day-labourer are hired by the day, and generally paid once a week. The rate of wages of women is usually fixed by the day, but of the men, when employed on day-work, at so much per week. The liberal class of farmers feel themselves bound to find their men work, "wet or dry," but there is another class of farmers of, as Dr. Fraser puts it in his report, "harder natures and tighter

purse-strings," who will send a labourer away on a wet morning, if there happens to be no directly remunerative job which they can set him to do. If a labourer is hired by the week, it is clearly reasonable that work by the week should be found him. The system of monthly hiring is confined to the solitary instance of the harvest. Those who are emphatically called farm servants—that is, labourers without whose services the farm could not be carried on for a single day: shepherd, carter, stockman, ploughboy, and dairymaid—are hired for the most part by the year. The usual periods of "hirings" are in the spring, or more commonly in the autumn, and where those abominations exist the transaction takes place at the "mop" or "statute fair." The agreements are generally verbal, "but what weighs most in the mind of the farm recruit . . . is the mystical shilling which passes from the palm of his new master into his own, which may be regarded as the agricultural *sacramentum*." These yearly hirings operate badly. The "statute fair" which is one of their accompaniments is a demoralising institution, and one, happily, which, though it flourishes still in a few districts, may be generally described as dying out.

A child's day and a woman's day are much the same: nine hours, with an hour and a half for meals. The almost unanimous opinion of the labouring man is, that if the parents can manage to dispense with his earnings, a boy should not go out to work before twelve or thirteen. Medical opinion, however, is not generally favourable to the employment of child-labour

in agriculture. To expose a boy of ten or twelve years of age for twelve hours a day to the cutting English winds is pronounced by competent medical authorities as sure to develop the seeds of any disease that may be latent in the constitution. In some parts of England, notably in Dorsetshire, the system of hiring whole families prevails.\* In these cases, when a labourer is hired for a year, the size of his family and the vigour of his wife and children are all points carefully investigated by the employer. There are of course many abuses incident to the employment of women in the fields, but the system is by no means one on which an unqualified condemnation can be passed. Bishop Fraser argues that it not only unsexes a woman in dress, manners, and character, making her masculine, but unfits or indisposes her for a woman's proper duties at home. Any one, however, who has visited the county of Northumberland, who has seen the Northumbrian women out in the fields and by their own firesides, will scarcely accept this view. In this the most prosperous of English counties, the labour of women, which consists of clearing the land, picking stones and weeding, turnip-hoeing, hay-making and harvest-work, barn-work with threshing and winnowing machines, is considered absolutely essential

\* The following advertisements are quoted by Mr. Stanhope from the *Dorchester County Chronicle* —

(1) Wanted, a farm labourer, with a working family, apply to Mr. G. Tett, Chiselborne.

(2) Wanted, a shepherd, with a grown-up son or two, apply to Mr. G. A. Ingram, Bagber.

(3) Wanted at Lady-day, a thatcher, with two or three boys from 9 to 14 years of age; apply to Mr. G. Mayo, Puddlehinton.



for the cultivation of the soil; yet the Northumbrian women are physically a splendid race. Their work in the fields is justly considered to be conducive to health. "I shall be glad," writes Mr. Harley of those who hold the opinion that field-work is degrading, "if they would visit these women in their own homes after they become wives and mothers. They would be received with a natural courtesy and good manners which would astonish them. Let the visitor ask to see the house; he will be 'taken over' it with many apologies that he should have seen it not 'redd up.' He will then be offered a chair in front of a large fire, with the never-absent pot and oven, the mistress meanwhile continuing her unceasing family duties, baking, cooking, cleaning, &c. Not one word of complaint will he hear; but he will be told that, though 'working people,' they are not poor; and a glance at the substantial furniture, the ample supply of bacon over his head, the variety of cakes and bread on the board, and the stores of butter, cheese, and meal in the house, will convince him of the fact. When he inquires about the children he will hear that, though they have not much to give them, the parents feel it to be their sacred duty to secure them the best instruction in their power, and '*that* they are determined they shall have.' The visitor will leave that cottage with the conviction that field-work has had no degrading effect, but that he has been in the presence of a thoughtful, contented, and unselfish woman." Dr. Cahill, of Berwick-on-Tweed, states

“from his knowledge of the town and country population” that “the women of the latter are far more healthy than the women of the former, and tenfold less affected by female complaints. He considers that their field-work fits them to be good bearers of children, and the strength of the population is kept up by them; and that the surplus of the agricultural population that enters the large towns maintains the standard of health and strength by marriage with the inhabitants of towns.”

Having thus described some of the most important details in the condition of the agricultural classes, it remains to say a few words on the general relations of employers and employed, and, in passing, of the nature of our agricultural system. What are called Acts of Husbandry vary in different parts of England, according to the character of the soil. Their object is to regulate the scale on which money is paid to the outgoing by the in-coming tenant for crops sown and for work and labour done. In all parts of England there is a regularly prescribed order in the rotation of crops; and the general rule is that arable land is cultivated in the proportion of one half corn, and one half roots—thus: first year, turnips; second, barley; third, mangold-wurzel; fourth, wheat. It is, too, the universal custom, and may be spoken of as the foundation of English agriculture, that whatever is produced on the farm, and is available for the purpose of manuring the soil, shall be devoted to the soil. As might be supposed, this development of agricultural enterprise implies a

series of striking improvements in agricultural processes. There is, indeed, in the agricultural system of the England of to-day almost as little of what one can identify with the agriculture of a century ago as with that of the ancient Italians, as sung by Virgil in his *Georgics*. The farmer who succeeds now-a-days is scientific, or he is nothing, and the danger rather arises from his staking too much capital upon the ground than from his putting into it too little. His farming apparatus bears the same relation to that of his predecessors as do the floating factories known as ironclads to the wooden walls of the old-fashioned men-of-war. He has learnt the use of reaping and mowing machines, each of which can do the work of ten men; of steam ploughs—costly implements, which are not within the reach of smaller farmers—which do the labour of ten men and twenty horses; of steam machines of other kinds for threshing corn, cutting straw and hay, and similar purposes. In addition to these, chemical assistance, ammoniacal and phosphatic manures, have rendered the farmer comparatively independent of the alternate system of cropping; and Mr. Caird calculates that these artificially fertilising agencies would enable the United Kingdom to bear an additional wheat crop equal to our supplies from Russia, with no perceptible strain on our agricultural system. Nor has there been less signal advance made, even though no new principle has been discovered, in the matters of drainage, the construction of farm buildings, and the breeding of stock. The system may be upwards

of half a century old, but its extension and development are comparatively new. One of the popular results of this extension is, that whereas thirty years ago not more than one-third of the people consumed animal food more than once a week, it is now eaten by nearly all of them, in the shape of meat, or cheese, or butter, once a day. Add to this the increase of the population, and it may be estimated that the total consumption of animal food in this country has trebled in the last three decades.

The total area of Great Britain is 76,300,000 acres, of which 26,300,000 consist of mountains, pasture, and waste, while 50,000,000 are crops, meadows, permanent pasture, and woods and forests. Most of this land is in the hands of the large landowners; rather more than one-fifth of it, representing nearly one-eleventh of its annual income, is held by noblemen, amounting to about 600 in number; one-fourth, excluding the proprietors of less than an acre, is held by 1,200 persons, each averaging 16,200 acres; another fourth by 6,200 persons, at an average of 3,150 acres; another fourth by 50,770, at an average of 380 acres; whilst the remaining fourth is held by 261,830 persons, at an average of 70 acres. The cultivation of this land is mainly in the hands of the tenant farmers, of whom there are 561,000 in Great Britain, each holding an average of 56 acres. The tendency is for land to become concentrated in the hands of large landlords, small proprietors being bought up. Thus the small squire is becoming gradually extinct, while the yeomen,

or small landowners farming their own land, have almost entirely disappeared. How rapidly we in England have passed from an agricultural to a manufacturing people may be judged from the fact that whereas fifty years ago a fifth of the working population of England was engaged in agriculture, those now occupied in this manner are less than a tenth.

We have already seen something of the general principles on which the great estates of the country are managed. The agricultural hierarchy may be said to consist of three—or, if we count the land-agent, of four—grades: the landlords and their agents, the farmers and their labourers. Each of these classes is being constantly altered in its composition. Landed property, to the value of several millions, changes hands annually, the tenants of farms are changed at Lady-day or Michaelmas, while the labourers are far more locomotive than formerly, and are perpetually acquiring the fresh knowledge that urges struggling men afar. Large drafts of these perpetually pass off to the other industrial pursuits of the country, and to the colonies; and the result of this process is seen in the weakening of the tie between the agricultural labourer and the parish in which he was born.

The only point of contact between the State and our agricultural system is the Enclosure Office, whose chief duty is now to improve suburban commons under a system of regulation by which the land may be drained, planted for ornament and shelter, and the surface be improved for pasturage, without

excluding the public from its enjoyment. The administration of the Drainage and Land Improvement Acts is in the hands of the Enclosure Commissioners, the object of these Acts being to permit landowners to borrow money for permanent improvements, and to charge their lands with the cost of these, to be liquidated by annual payments which, within a fixed time, reimburse both principal and interest. Again, the Commissioners are authorised to carry out exchanges and partitions of lands, and with their assistance any two landowners can at very trifling expense correct whatever irregularity there may be in the boundary of their respective estates, or even exchange entire properties. The conditions upon which the sanction of the Commissioners is obtained are, first, that the exchange shall be demonstratively beneficial to the two estates; secondly, that the exchange shall be fair and equal; thirdly, that due notice is given, and that the order of exchange is not confirmed until three months afterwards.

If it be considered that the production of bread and meat within these islands has nearly reached its limits, the dairy and market-garden system is, on the other hand, extending. The country, in fact, is becoming less of a farm and more of a garden. Meanwhile, the population is increasing at the rate of 350,000 a year, or nearly a thousand a day. The consumption of food is becoming prodigious, and now represents imports of one hundred millions sterling. Twenty years hence, we may have not thirty millions

but forty millions of people to feed, and, of course, there will have been a proportionate increase in the import of provisions. Whether and in what degree the advantage of being on the spot will enable the tenants to pay the imperial and local charges and rent to the owners, is the question of the future. The importation of foreign grain from America, and in a less degree of meat, yearly endangers his profits. But the tenant can leave his farm with more or less loss, while the landowner must remain and solve the question. The speculative remedy proposed for the loss at which farmers may conduct their operations is the redistribution of the soil, and the creation of a class of small proprietors. Independently of the fact that in England no overwhelming desire for land exists, it is more than doubtful whether its advocates themselves are persuaded that such a scheme is practicable. Thus it is admitted by many of those who are in favour of it, that it would be necessary for tenants, should such a system ever be established, to co-operate for many of the more expensive processes of industry. While we are on the subject of the general relation of landlords and tenants, it may be observed that though, as has been pointed out in the chapter on estate management, the same method of administration is generally observed both in the properties of individuals and of corporations, the position occupied by the farmer is not precisely the same in each. In the first place, the individual landlord, be he great peer or commoner, looks for political power, and directly

or indirectly influences the votes of his tenants at general elections; corporations, on the other hand, have no political influence, and the farmer who rents his land from a corporation is conscious of a certain superiority over the agriculturist who is the tenant of an individual. In the second place, as corporations have no souls, so have they no impecuniosity; there is always money for repairs, and one of the consequences of this is that the position of the agricultural labourer is often better on the estate of a corporation than on those of individuals, since, when cottages and other repairs are wanted, money is always forthcoming for their erection.

In prosperous times the wage of the agricultural labourer throughout England averages little less than 18s. a week, varying from 13s. a week in the south, to 18s. in the east, and 20s. or 21s. in the extreme north, where not only is the rate increased by competition of manufacturing and commercial employment, but the work done is generally regarded as of a higher quality. This weekly wage by no means exhaustively represents the earnings of a capable or active worker, much less of his family, supposing the family to be of industrial age. Both at the time of wheat and hay harvest there are, as we have seen, longer hours of work and higher rates of pay. In the midlands and in the south of England there is the opportunity of supplementing the regular weekly payment by odd jobs of hedging, ditching, and draining, given out as piece-work. Add to this that the wagoner, herdsman, shepherd, and any other



labourer, who, being charged with the attention of the live stock of the farm, to use the expression already employed, is never off duty, is frequently furnished with a cottage and garden rent-free, and it will be seen that the agricultural toiler is not without substantial perquisites.\* It is not the case that the introduction of machinery into the processes of harvest have reduced the available earnings of the labourer. "In the fen districts of Cambridgeshire and Lincolnshire"—Mr. Little is again our authority—"a strong man will consider himself very ill paid if he cannot earn 9s. or 10s. a day in following the reaper, and 7s. or 8s. when housing the corn." Thus in the autumn of 1877 a family, consisting of a man, his wife, a girl aged sixteen, a boy aged fourteen, and two other children of, respectively, eleven and nine, earned in that part of England during a period of five weeks just £25, to which must be added sixteen bushels of gleaning corn picked up by the wife and two girls, and valued at 5s. a bushel. Thus we arrive at a total of near £30. The normal wages of this man were 15s. a week. As a matter of fact, working for forty-seven weeks out of the fifty-two, he made an average of 17s. a week, and the entire earnings of his family between Michaelmas 1876 and Michaelmas 1877 were

\* In Northumberland the labourer generally has a cow kept for him by his employer, at a charge of £8 a year. "As far," writes Mr. Little, "as the children of his household are concerned, he is, therefore, almost independent of supplies of animal food, and I cannot but attribute some of the fine physical powers of the northern race to the use of this nourishing and strengthening diet."

£97 0s. 9½d. Mr. Clare Sewell Read once remarked to the writer, that a fair day's work secures its worth in money all England over. Mr. Little's opinion is similar, for he says, "I shall content myself with the assertion, that as a rule the average amount of weekly wages paid in the country may be taken as no very unfair index of the actual amount of work performed by the average labourer of such districts. Whether the nominal weekly wages are 13s. or 18s., the amount of actual labour performed bears something like a relative proportion to these sums."

But it may be urged, that since 1876, and even since 1877, there has been a great decline in the rate of agricultural wages. It, therefore, occurred to the writer to endeavour to secure an exact return of the wages paid in different localities of England to farm labourers during the week ending February 1, 1879. This, by the kindness of a gentleman who has exceptional facilities for securing such information, we are enabled to do. The question was put to more than sixty farmers in various counties, "What weekly wage do you give this current week to an ordinary farm labourer on your farm?" The replies produced the following results, which may be depended on as entirely trustworthy:—

In the last week in January, 1879, the wage of an ordinary agricultural labourer may be taken to have been, in Essex, Suffolk, and Norfolk, 12s. to 13s. a week; in the counties of Hertford, Bucks, Berks, and Oxford, 12s. to 14s. a week; in Cambridgeshire

13s.; in the central counties, and from Bedfordshire northwards, at 13s. to 15s.; and in Nottinghamshire and Lincolnshire, 15s.; in Yorkshire it ranged from 15s. at the southern end to 16s., 17s., and 18s. proceeding northwards; and in Durham the rate may be taken as 19s. to 20s.; and in Northumberland as 21s. a week.

In Cumberland the rate was reported as 20s. a week, and immediately adjoining to the Hæmatite Mines, 24s. a week both in Cumberland and Lancashire.

In the rest of Lancashire and in the manufacturing districts and near large towns the rate varies very much as the population is more or less employed. In the agricultural parts of Cheshire the rate was 15s.; in Staffordshire and Salop it was 14s. to 15s.; in Worcestershire, 13s. to 14s.; and in Herefordshire, 12s. a week. In Dorsetshire and Wiltshire the rate may be taken as 12s. a week, and in some cases 11s. a week; in Somersetshire as 13s. to 14s.; and in Devonshire 12s. a week. Along the south coast, through Hants and Sussex, the rate was about 14s.; in Kent it ranged from 14s. in the Weald to 17s. or 18s. near Rochester and Sittingbourne. At the beginning of the present century the wages paid for agricultural labour—supplemented, as we shall presently see, very largely in every case out of the rates—was, on an average, 9s. a week; wheat being at £5 13s. 7d. a quarter—nine and a half days' work representing the price of a bushel—and meat at 9d. a pound. In 1878 the average wage has been calculated at 15s.; wheat being at £2 7s. a quarter, a bushel being earned by the pecuniary yield of two and one-third

days' work, and meat being at  $6\frac{3}{4}$ d. a pound. To this 15s. must be added, from what we have seen above, the extra money earned during harvest-time, and allowances of beer or milk. Further, it must be remembered that rents are lower, and that all articles of food and clothing are infinitely cheaper than they were forty years ago. Eradicate drunkenness, practically inculcate the virtue of thrift, encourage emigration, and the agricultural labourer ought never to be upon the rates from the cradle to the grave. On the whole, drunkenness is diminishing, while as for thrift, there is reason to believe that it will come as education improves and prosperity grows. After all, want of thrift and increase in expenditure on the material comforts of life are not the evils peculiar to a class, but are common to the whole community; and there is good reason to doubt whether the agricultural labourer is relatively more thriftless than is the artisan or the professional man. There is, indeed, in his household more, perhaps, of deliberate waste and of prejudice against economy than in the social level a little above him; certainly more reluctance to make experiments in new and economical foods; less dread than might have been wished of an old age of pauperism, and of dependence on the bounty of others. But then let us remember what are the agencies and influences of which the agricultural labourer is the outcome. It is not merely that his life in the south of England, where he is simply for the most part the passive instrument of the orders of the bailiff or the farmer, calls into play none

of those faculties, none of that nerve or power of mental initiative displayed among the shepherds of the north, "the isolation of whose lives," writes Mr. Little, "and the difficulties of whose calling, have so contributed to thoughtfulness and reflection upon the matters which concern their every-day life and the welfare of their charges, that it would, perhaps, be difficult in any country to find a class possessed of greater natural intelligence and sagacity." The agricultural labourer generally throughout England is at the present day the victim of vicious usages and legislation, which have made his comparative degradation hereditary. A hundred years ago wages were, as the above-quoted figures will show, generally low, the price of provisions was high, the labour market was overstocked. The great wars from which we were just emerging had dislocated and paralysed the entire commercial and industrial system of the country, and the immense majority of the labouring population could only find any employment in agriculture. The state of the agricultural community—itsself nearly the bulk of the nation—bordered closely upon general starvation. The expedient was resorted to of giving relief to every English peasant out of the rates, quite independently of whether he was or was not at work. This was nothing less than a system of wholesale compulsory pauperism, of direct discouragement of the virtues of prudence, thrift, self-help. The revenues of entire parishes went to the relief of their poor, and cases were not unknown in which the owners of estates were

without a shilling of their income, which was swallowed up in this quicksand of debasing and mischievous expenditure. In 1834 came the new Poor Law, which created union districts, and gave a direct motive to the collective inhabitants of the entire area, instead of to the dwellers in a small village, to check the tendency towards pauperism. Other causes, equally beneficent to the British peasantry, were at work. Manufacturing and other industries became developed in the south of England, as well as in the north, and the introduction and extension of railways enabled the peasant to transfer his labour from places where it was not wanted to markets in which a demand for it existed. Still the improvement in the peasant's condition was much more rapid in the north than in the south, and in Scotland wages were 18s. and 20s. a week, long after they were not more than 10s. in Devonshire and in Dorset. Yet agriculture in the south was far from stationary; on the contrary, it was making marked progress, and that wages did not rise in a corresponding manner is only to be accounted for by the fact that in the south there was more labour available, and that labour of a worse quality, than in the north.

Up to this time the farmer had been absolutely master of the situation. He regulated the rate of the daily wage of his labourers at the price of wheat, with little or no reference to the rates of the other necessities of life. When, however, free trade had generally reduced the price of wheat, this method became impossible. Still, there was no kind of organisation among the rural

labourers of England, as against their employers the farmers, which at all corresponded with the unions that had grown up in urban industries. A great innovation, however, in this respect was at hand. Founded in 1871, with the avowed purpose of increasing wages, the Agricultural Labourers' Union soon covered the entire country with its organisation. It at once sent up wages, but it also changed very generally the relations between agricultural labourers and farmers. The years 1872, 1873, and 1874 were a period of fierce struggle in the agricultural world, the last of these years being marked by the vigorous resistance to the demands of the Union, which may be described as a great machinery for the encouragement of strikes, in the east of England. Yet, on the whole, the Agricultural Labourers' Union must be allowed to have accomplished much of its programme. It has stimulated emigration both to the colonies and to the manufacturing districts of England, and it sent up wages in 1875 thirty per cent. Co-operating and coinciding with the extension of cheap literature, the circulation of newspapers, the growing contact between town and country, the Union has generally stimulated the mental activity and perception of the working man. It has not confronted us with any immediate revolutionary perils, but it has left the labouring classes in rural districts better able to take care of themselves than they were, and it has done this because it has been only one of many movements of the time towards the same goal. If it has diminished the willingness

of the labourers to place implicit and childlike confidence in the justice and generosity of their employers, it can scarcely be said permanently, to any great degree, to have embittered the relations of the two. It is not against the tenant farmers that the agricultural labourers profess for the most part any grievance. In the west of England, throughout those districts in which their social condition is still deplorably bad, the cottages being little better than mud hovels, and the filth and squalor indescribable, the admission is made by the suffering peasants that the lowness of the wage is not the fault of the farmers. "The landlords," is the burden of their conversation, "are hard."

That there are obvious disadvantages connected with the Union cannot be denied. Their political teachers often inculcate vicious and unsound principles of economy—pretend, for instance, that the owners and holders of land enjoy in the matter of taxation privileges denied to manufacturers; the truth being that the heaviest land tax of all is paid by the corn-producing counties of England, and the lightest by the mineral and manufacturing districts of the north. It is urged, too, that the Union has deteriorated the quality of the labourers' work. It is certainly opposed to piece-work, which is the chief, perhaps the only mode of raising inferior labour to a higher standard. By insisting on a uniform rate of day-work and short hours it brings the best labourers down to the lowest level. "Upon this farm," writes a well-known agriculturist in an eastern county, "of 420 acres, I pay



away annually over £1,000 in manual labour, exclusive of the skilled labour employed in steam ploughing and threshing which I hire, and yet my work is badly done, and also in arrear. I cannot get any piece-work done, unless I happen to be on the spot, and coerce them into it, and even then the work is scamped."

"The day has now come," writes Mr. Little, "when the labourer, if he is to rise in the social scale, must look mainly to himself. If in the dark days of the past the laws seemed against him, it is no longer so. He is a free man, free from conscription, or compulsory service in the army, and the equal of those about him. Legislation has done its best for him and his children. He is at liberty to move wherever he can get the best return for his labour. He is practically the only untaxed man in the community, since (except in the article of tea, on which a small duty is still paid) he can, if he chooses, by abstinence from those articles, avoid the imposts on beer, spirits, and tobacco." An admirable and practically free education is granted to his children. This education, when its results have had time to make themselves felt, will no doubt give us a new order of British peasantry. Nor is it the only machinery at work which is gradually improving his position and extending the horizon of his views. While ploughing matches, prizes for draining, hedging, ditching, stacking, and other operations of husbandry, cottage-garden shows, and other institutions, tend to make him a better labourer, the general influences of the time are all in the direction of improvement. One



## CHAPTER XII.

### PAUPERISM AND THRIFT.

General Appearance of the Workhouse and its Inmates—Paupers out for a Walk—Composition of the Pauper Class—Tendency towards Pauperism not peculiar to the Lower Orders—Out-door Relief—General View of Difficulties of its Administration—Social and Moral Consequences of Out-door Relief—Out-door Relief and Pauperism—Remedies for Pauperism—Effect of Out-door Relief upon Wages and Character—The Poor Law and Socialism—Should the Workhouse Test be made universal?—Antidotes to Pauperism: Voluntary Help and Friendly Societies—Attitude and Duties of the State to Friendly Societies—Penny Banks—Further Requirements for teaching Thrift—Co-operation.

OF the predisposing causes of pauperism something has been said in the last chapter. Of its existence it is impossible to be long in any great town, or indeed in any country district, without being forcibly reminded. That gaunt, graceless, red-brick building yonder, with the long narrow windows, placed in an enclosure of grass-plot, gravel-walk, and flower-bed, is the new workhouse. Everything about it seems to tell of leanness, depression, misery, and want. The walls are naked; the herbage is stunted; the recently-planted poplars and other trees decline to thrive in so poverty-stricken a soil; as for the flower-beds, no seed has ever been sown in their mould, or, if sown, has never dared to put forth its tender sproutings, which tell of coming bud and blossom. Inside this joyless edifice the guardians are engaged in examining and adjudicating on the claims of the

needy throng whose members have just passed in through the iron gates, to the relief that does not involve residence in the "house" itself—relief consisting of three shillings a week and three loaves of bread; or, if it be later in the day, the master and matron may be passing in review before them the luckless tramps of both sexes who have applied for a night's lodging in the casual ward. There are few sadder sights than this muster, and it is conducted upon principles which have about them painfully little of the associations of charity. The authorities aforesaid commence their examination of the necessitous applicants on the assumption that each one is an impostor, an habitual tramp, who spends his or her life in travelling up and down the weary roads, now begging and now stealing, as opportunity may offer. Hence master and matron alike hesitate to admit that any particular face which comes before them is new. They may ask the question, "Where do you come from?" but they place evidently no trust in the answer; and there always comes the inquiry, "When were you last here?" Now in the majority of cases it may be admitted that the official mind is right, and that the professional pauper who is also an habitual tramp is not more honest than the obsolete highwayman. On the other hand, there are instances—and when the times are hard these instances are not few—in which the industrious mechanic or artisan, who has no funds to travel by railway, performs his journey from one centre of industry to another on foot, and is compelled at nightfall to betake

himself to that shelter which is the common refuge of the penniless. But there is no distinction of persons possible to official eyes. Deserving and undeserving, the vicious, the drunken and dishonest, the sober, the unfortunate, and the industrious, are all relegated to one category, all subjected to the same ordeal. The internal discipline and management of workhouses vary, but in the case of the greatest number the occupant of the casual ward has, during his residence inside its walls, a rougher time than many a prisoner in a convict gaol.

Who are the habitual inmates of this house, which has not, and which ought not, perhaps, to have, any of the comforts or suggestions of home about it? If you were to spend a couple of hours under its roof, you would find there men and women of all ages, and of conditions of life originally widely apart. There, too, are children who have only just come into the world, and whose mothers have fallen into hopeless, helpless want, or into sin and shame, or into both simultaneously. Yet it is better for a boy or girl to look upon light first in a workhouse than in one of the vile alleys or pestiferous slums which are the nurseries of crime and criminals. The guardians will at least not permit these waifs and strays of humanity to grow up absolutely neglected and ignorant. Directly they can learn anything there is the workhouse school, and as soon as their hands can hold any instrument of industry they are taught the rudiments of an occupation which may help them to get an honest living. Contrast with the children the group of men

and women, most of them well stricken in years or prematurely aged, weak and tottering, who have just shuffled out of the workhouse yard. These are the resident paupers of the union, and they have received permission to visit their friends and relatives in the neighbourhood, not without a stringent word of warning against mendicancy and against intoxication. The true light in which to regard this throng, whose members walk on by twos and threes, is as representing the failures of our civilisation. They ought to have saved a competence, or to be supported by grateful children, or to be spending the residue of their days in climes where the struggle for existence is less keen than in England. At any rate, they ought not to be here. Here, however, they are, and here for some time yet to come they are likely to continue—a familiar, and, to those who are alive to all that their presence means, a melancholy sight. There is no mistaking their identity. The men are clothed in a low felt hat, jacket and trousers of fustian, or coat and trousers of brown cloth or velveteen, according as it happens to be a week-day or a Sunday; the women are conspicuous by their uniform of coarse dark blue cotton dress, poke bonnet of rough straw, and thin woollen shawl of shepherd's plaid thrown across their shoulders. It is curious to observe how some of those who had appeared the most hopelessly infirm before the workhouse authorities and in the immediate precincts of the building, proceed at a comparatively rapid rate, and assume naturally a more or less agile manner, when

these are out of sight. For the most part, however, the paupers of both sexes pick their way slowly, keeping their eyes fixed on the ground, and walking as near the edge of the pavement on the side of the gutter as possible, mumbling inarticulately the while. There is a reason for this. There is not only the chance of their finding an odd coin at their feet—you may see the men trailing their sticks in the gutter itself to recognise by the sound the possible piece of copper or silver—but it will be hard if they cannot find some of the cigar stumps and shreds of tobacco which they love, and from the enjoyment of which they are not deterred by an admixture of mire and filth.

Of this mixed band of dependants on the law-exacted charity of the ratepayers some have been gravitating more or less rapidly in the direction of pauperism throughout their whole life. Educated in squalor, in shiftlessness, in sin, accustomed from the first to regard the "house" as the not illegitimate goal of existence, they have never seriously struggled to avoid the necessity of entering it. They have worked fitfully, intermittently, squandering their earnings on periodical debauches at the beer-house at frequent intervals. Sick-ness has come, or they have been out of work, or they could not pay their rent, and there were no friends to help them. First they have managed to exist on the dole allowed them weekly by the guardians without residing beneath the workhouse roof. But they have found infirmity grow on them apace. Their sons, daughters, and other relatives, have closed the doors

against them, and the choice has been between the union and absolute homelessness. Not unfrequently it happens that many of the aged inmates of the workhouse have not only seen what are conventionally known as better days, but have been nurtured in comfort and ease, in luxury and wealth.

There are few villages in England in which families are not to be found for whom the workhouse seems a bourn as inevitable as the grave itself. When one enters a cottage, passively surrendered to destitution, and notes how completely men, women, and children have abandoned themselves to the paralysing influences of want; not hopeless alone, but indifferent to any chance of amelioration; sunk in a stupor alike moral and physical; ignorant whence the next mouthful of bread is to come, and, as one may think, nearly as callous on the subject as they are ignorant: when one notes all this, one witnesses the genuine material out of which paupers are made. Again, that drink leads to beggary as well as to crime is a commonplace. It is doubtless an exceedingly frequent cause of pauperism, but there is another cause less specific and definite, but certainly not more rare. In all grades of life one meets with people who, from their infancy upwards, are impotent to help themselves. They are morally invertebrate—without energy, without spirit, without ambition. When such persons are independent of their own exertions for the necessities of life no evil happens to them. But if a calamity comes, if the enterprise in which the capital on whose interest



they live is embarked collapses, they are altogether without resource. They become pensioners on relatives or friends if they have them, or they disappear from view if they have not. Now this temperament is unhappily far from unknown among the working classes. It is the baleful inheritance of generations, and is perpetuated from father to son. These are the drones of the hive. They are not the exclusive incumbrance of any class: they belong to all alike. The only difference is that in the higher walks of life they are spoken of with contemptuous pity as unlucky, and in the lower as paupers.

Thus, roughly speaking, pauperism consists of two sections, the first composed of those who are paupers by no fault of their own; the second of those who have adopted pauperism as their vocation in life, because Poor Law relief enables them to exist without working. For the former, the Poor Law and the workhouse, if they are to enter it, should be a relief and a refuge, for the latter it ought to be a punishment. Hence the severe regimen of work and discipline enforced in many unions—a regimen perfectly just in the case of sturdy tramps, but painfully harsh in the case of those who have been dragged down by a destiny which they could not resist. Before pauperism became the subject of legislation by the State, there existed in those doles and charities, which represented the munificence of previous generations, the means of relieving the more deserving members of the pauper class. Gradually these endowments became a machinery for disseminating pauperism

amongst the working classes. Hundreds of men and women were drawn from the paths of honest labour by their participation in the almsgiving. It was the development of the habitual pauper class, those who steadily refused to work for their living, which rendered a Poor Law necessary, and which naturally gave to such a measure much of its disciplinary and punitive character. Provision for the meritorious and helpless poor was a secondary purpose of this Poor Law, and it is the fusion of two purposes in one system which creates an anomaly and a hardship. Our method of dealing with the exceedingly complex aggregate of pauperism can scarcely be satisfactory so long as the workhouse is at once a place of punishment for hardened and wilful paupers, and an almshouse and infirmary for the old, the sickly, the infirm, or the victims of sudden and unavoidable calamities. The problem to be solved, and which has as yet defied solution, is how, while not refusing relief which is at once Christian and economical for those who really want and deserve it, we may stamp out the pauperism which is preventible, and, therefore, so far morally criminal.

One of the questions that chiefly engages the attention of Boards of Guardians has been indicated in a previous chapter\*—whether residence in the workhouse shall or shall not be the condition of relief from the rates. We will now proceed to examine the reasons that may influence our guardians in the decision at

\* Chapter IV.

which, on this matter, they may arrive. In other words, we have to confront the whole momentous problem of the expediency or in expediency of out-door relief. On the first view of the matter it may seem impossible to refuse assent to the proposition that it is at once more merciful and more economical to subsidise a household with a few shillings per week, enabling the family with the aid thus granted to hold itself together, and to keep a roof above its head, than peremptorily to destroy this little centre of domestic life, and to insist upon supporting those who constitute it at the expense of the ratepayers. When Christian charity and worldly wisdom point unmistakably the same way, what need, it may be asked, or what excuse can there be for hesitation? If humanity is a virtue that resides in the hearts of Boards of Guardians, why should they doubt for a moment which of two alternatives—on the one hand the destruction of a home at a larger expense, on the other its preservation at a smaller—they are bound to adopt? But the fact remains that guardians do hesitate very much indeed in this matter, and that there is a gradually growing belief among them that of the two alternatives just specified it is on the whole better to choose the more drastic and the less apparently humane one. Unless, therefore, we are prepared to maintain that there is something in the office of a guardian which poisons the stream of humanity at its source, we must admit that there are probably good and sufficient reasons for a hesitation which is *primâ facie* inexplicable.

If it could be ensured that out-door relief was only given for the succour of the severest want or of absolute destitution, in cases where destitution and want were, humanly speaking, not preventible—were the results of continued illness, death, or some other desolating calamity—though all grounds of objection to it would not be dismissed, the system would not be as severely attacked as it now is. When out-door relief is given, it must be given necessarily to the undeserving as well as the deserving, to those who are beggared by thoughtlessness, improvidence, drunkenness, as well as to those who have fallen victims to relentless and unavoidable fate. Theoretically, the line might be drawn by adequate investigation. Practically, the scrutiny is not only extremely difficult, but is seldom insisted on. There are three authorities concerned in the inquiry: the relieving officer, the medical officer, and the guardians. The first of these is charged with a multiplicity of duties, which prevent him from acquainting himself with the full details of the different cases that come before him. “With perhaps several hundred persons,” remarks Professor James Bryce in a paper read at the Northampton Poor Law Conference, January, 1876, “receiving weekly payments, and new applications continually arriving, he has no time to inquire particularly into the character or resources of the applicants, what relatives they have, whether they are secretly receiving aid from some other quarter, whether they keep their houses in a healthy state, whether they send their children to school.” The doctor is frequently deceived, and,

indeed, self-interest may naturally prompt him to be "a little blind." "The guardians, however fervent their zeal, have generally no means of ascertaining for themselves what the circumstances of the pauper are. If one member advocates the claim of some pauper from his own neighbourhood, the rest are disposed to accede, and thus a bad example is often set. Now," continues Professor Bryce, "a close personal scrutiny, such as is given in Elberfield or Boston, is more efficient and more just than the rough-and-ready application of the workhouse test. But that test is far better than such inquiries as our Boards can commonly make."

If we say that there is a total of 710,175 paupers in England, representing one in thirty, or rather more than three per cent. of the population, we shall not be far wrong. Of these 224,553, exclusive of those who are not able-bodied or insane, are in receipt of out-door relief. The cost represented by the aggregate of the entire pauperism of England was, in the year ending March, 1877, £7,400,034, that by those who are not in the workhouse but are upon the rates, £2,092,190. What does this mean for the social and moral welfare of the country? What is the commentary which these facts and figures constitute, upon the condition of the wages-earning class?

Before we address ourselves to the general question of poor relief, it will be advisable to say a few words further on the particular department of it represented by the out-door system. A guardian, let it be supposed, honestly entertains the opinion that out-door

relief has the superior economical advantages, which on the first blush of the matter would certainly seem natural to it, and that such relief reaches distress which, were it not for that beneficent agency, would remain uncared for. The cost of each family in the workhouse is, he will compute, ten shillings a week; outside the workhouse the cost is only five shillings.\* Here, then, he may argue, is a clear gain to the rates, in other words, to the community, of more than fifty per cent. But experience proves this sort of reasoning to be fallacious. The guardian who is opposed to out-door relief in all cases says with unanswerable force that the universal compulsory application of the workhouse test stimulates the poor to exertion and self-help, keeps them clear of the degradation of pauperism, and is as economically effective as it is morally salutary, while experience shows that the offer of relief in the workhouse is refused in nine cases out of ten. On the other hand, he observes, many of the labouring classes to whom the stigma of pauperism is intolerable, when emphasised by residence inside the workhouse, are unreluctant and successful applicants for out-door relief. Mr. Doyle, in one of his Poor Law Reports, draws attention to the fact that of 647 applicants for out-door relief only twenty-seven accepted the condition of workhouse residence, from which it may be inferred that there cannot have been *bona*

\* An able-bodied widow with three children would, on an average, cost 5s. a week with school fees; in all, say 5s. 6d. The average cost per head in the house is 3s. 4d. a week, average cost per head out-door, 2s. 9d.

*fide* distress in all the instances. Not less significant is the circumstance that in Whitechapel weekly out-door relief has been reduced in five years from 2,556 to 209, or that in St. George's-in-the-East the rate has fallen from 1,200 to 85. It is impossible to suppose that these statistics merely indicate a suppression or concealment of pauperism impotent to relieve itself, and that however the figures may have changed, the facts remain the same as ever, the total of misery and suffering just as real and hopeless. The answer to such an assumption is that the cry of suffering hundreds, if ignored by the guardians, would compel a hearing from the public. Of course the reduction of pauperism has not been, and cannot be accomplished without special provisions, and much expenditure of personal trouble. First, each relieving officer must have, as he has had in the two parishes just named, a district whose limits will enable him to learn whatever can be learned about the applicants for out-door relief. Secondly, the children of widows, who form thirty-three per cent. of the metropolitan paupers, must be taken into district schools, a practice which has been followed out upon a large scale in Whitechapel and St. George's. Thirdly, there must be close and systematic co-operation with such institutions as the Charity Organisation Society, societies for the formation of shoe-black brigades, emigration societies, and other such associations. If it is asked what is to be done when the workhouse is made the condition of the receipt of relief, and the needy applicants decline it, alleging that they would rather starve in the street, the

answer may be given in the words of the Rev. S. A. Barnett, a clergyman of great experience at the East End of London, who says that they will not refuse when they know that without the workhouse no relief is possible. If, again, it is objected that the workhouse test involves the violent and unnatural separation between children and parents, the answer is, that the children will be better tended in the workhouse and district schools than in an impoverished and destitute home.

Now if it can be shown, as the facts just enumerated above certainly seem to show, that out-door relief has a tendency to act as a premium on pauperism, and as a discouragement to thrift, exertion, and independence of character, it follows that whatever objections can be urged against a Poor Law—against, that is, the relief of the indigent and destitute out of the contributions to the State made by those who are comparatively well-to-do—can be urged with additional force against the practice of out-door relief. Another appeal may be made to the experience of the East End of London in support of this view. So long as the East End widows were subsidised by payments from the rates they were able to compete with the seamstresses on terms advantageous in a certain miserable way to themselves, but absolutely ruinous to the professional needlewoman. Since out-door relief has become the rare exception, the wages of the class for whom Hood evoked so precious a stream of sympathy by the “Song of the Shirt” have materially increased. This



suggests a law of universal application. Successive reports of the Local Government Board show that "relief in aid of wages" exposes the independent few to an unfair competition in the labour market, from those, who relying for part of their support on the poor-rate, can afford to sell their labour at a lower price. Now, as Mr. J. R. Pretyman, in an able and comprehensive treatise on the whole subject, under the title of "Dispauperisation," shows, this is what mathematically, and on *a priori* reasons we might expect. "If wages were left to be regulated wholly by an adjustment between the wants of the wages-giver and the wants of the wages-taker, with no element like that of poor-rates or other taxation to disturb the transaction, wages would naturally be the higher. Agricultural labourers, in particular, cannot fairly expect that their wages should be as high as they might be if there were no poor-rates, since land, out of which both their wages and these rates are paid, can only bear a certain amount of charges, and has to remunerate three parties—the owner, the occupier, and the labourers upon it. Now, the owner on the average obtains no greater interest on the value of his land than from two to three per cent.—that is, not more than he could obtain by investment in the public funds. The occupier makes no more than the ordinary mercantile profit on the capital and skill which he employs in agriculture; indeed, it would seem that his gains are less than those of successful trade, for seldom in comparison is a rich farmer to be

found, and seldom in probates of wills is the estate of a farmer "sworn under" amounts such as those for which the estates of merchants and other tradesmen weekly figure in the newspapers. There remains a third portion of the proceeds of land, and from this portion come wages and poor-rates. If, therefore, the landowner is to have his moderate interest, and the occupier his fair profit, all that is paid from the land in poor-rates will be in diminution of what is paid in wages. What is plus in rates will be minus in wages."\*

Nor is what may be called the *a posteriori* evidence on this point less conclusive. Reliance on the poor-rates operates in much the same way with the working classes as reliance upon the indulgence of a wealthy father does with a spendthrift son. It is very well to dilate upon the humiliation of dependence upon the rates to a day labourer, to urge him to contribute to a friendly society, so that he may be able to walk erect before his fellows with the proud consciousness of being a self-supporting institution. But these arguments are deficient in practical cogency, and the reply of the sturdy son of toil to these counsels is too often virtually identical with the remark which Sir Stafford Northcote once placed in the lips of the habitual pauper, that "there can be no friendly society so good as that into which you put nothing and take out everything"—the rates. Education, political knowledge, and other salutary agencies may modify the view prevailing

\* "Dispauperisation," pp. 27, 28.

among the working classes in these matters. At the present moment the possibility of relief from the rates, and especially of out-door relief, enters as much into the calculation of thousands of English labourers who are about to marry, or, for the matter of that, about to get drunk, as would the possession of a series of good investments in railway stock to the professional man who was making his future arrangements. Anticipatory reliance on the poor-rates acts as a stimulant to illicit intercourse and to an early and improvident marriage. Pauperism begets pauperism as surely as crime and drink make criminals and drunkards. A new generation of paupers is thus ever springing up. The influence which reduces the rate of wages continues, the demand for the necessaries of life increases, and their cost is raised. Wages are not only kept down, but the purchasing power of wages is steadily lessened. These facts will sooner or later be clear to the working classes themselves. "I have reason," said Mr. George Houlton, himself a guardian, at a Poor Law Conference held at Leicester, November, 1875, "to believe that some of the best men who have emigrated from North Lincolnshire have done so from a determination to separate themselves from a burden consequent on the administration of the Poor Laws, rather than for any dissatisfaction on the labour question. One of the best men, who had not less than 3s. a day all last winter, left me in the spring, and told me he was determined to leave a country where the law compelled men willing to work to maintain those who could but would not do so."

The relations between the poor-rates and labour wages are not now so scandalous as they were before the Poor Law of 1834. The report of the Commission which preceded that measure made it abundantly clear, first, that the pressure of the poor-rates threw a great deal of land out of cultivation—in one instance, in that of the parish of Lenham, Kent, the poor-rate on 420 acres of land amounting to £300 a year; secondly, that the reduction of poor-rates at once leads to the raising of wages. But the principle remains the same now as it was half a century since.

Facts are only too plentiful to show the systematic manner in which, to the ruin of their own dependence, and the jeopardy of the finer and tenderer feelings implanted in them by nature, the working classes trade upon the existing provision for poor-relief. The Rev. G. Portal, of Burghclere, Hants, told his hearers at a recent Poor Law Conference of a particularly acute and audacious tramp, who, on finding himself in a casual ward, at once insisted on having a warm bath. He was refused. “Refer,” was his immediate comment on the refusal, “to Consolidated Order So-and-So, and you will see I must have my hot-water bath. Give me your name, please; I shall write to the Local Government Board.” If the tramp was within his legal right no blame, it may be said, can attach to him for enforcing it. But the same astute spirit is often exhibited in an attempt not to enforce the law but to evade it. In a large percentage of applications made by women for out-door relief the women are deserted wives. Now

the reports teem with proofs that very often the alleged desertion is an act of collusion between wife and husband. Take the following, which is quoted by Mr. Pretyman from Mr. Wodehouse's Report for 1871-2. "At Plymouth, where deserted wives are as a rule given out-relief, one of the relieving officers informed me that he had found cases in which a wife had for several weeks been receiving relief while her husband had never been out of town, and many other cases in which the wife, whilst in receipt of relief, had been receiving remittances from her husband. Such remittances are very easily made without the knowledge of the relieving officer." The door is opened to a host of frauds of this description, and lax administration constitutes a direct inducement not only to unthrift and idleness, but to deceit, trickery, and imposture. It is an equally repulsive and indisputable feature in the system that it weakens the ties of natural duty, destroys the sense of mutual responsibility among the members of a common household, at the same time that it degrades, brutalises, and hardens. "The burden," says Dr. Magee, Bishop of Peterborough, at the North Midland Poor Law Conference, held in 1875, "of maintaining an aged parent or a sick parent is resented by children, who return to the supplication for help the answer, 'Go upon the rates.'" Dr. Magee might have added, what the Rev. S. A. Barnett subsequently pointed out, that nowhere is filial affection stronger than among Dr. Magee's countrymen, in Ireland, where relief is scarce. Mr. Pretyman cites another illustration

of this spirit from the Report of the Poor Law Inspectors to the Local Government Board for 1874-5:—

“ ‘On the day on which I attended a meeting of the guardians of the West Firle Union, an application was made under the following circumstances:—The family desiring relief consisted of the following: An old man, aged 67, confessedly past work; his wife, ten years younger, earned 4s. a week; an unmarried son, aged 23, living with his parents, and earning 13s. 6d. a week; another son, aged 17, also living in the (parents’) house, and earning 10s. a week; two children under eight years of age. It appeared to me, continues the Inspector, to be a case in which the workhouse ought to be offered, and that in the case of its being accepted, legal proceedings ought to have been taken against the eldest son. The guardians, however, granted a weekly allowance of 2s. and two gallons of flour. I was surprised to find that in several other unions the guardians informed me that if a similar case was brought before them, they would not be unwilling to grant out-relief.’ Such is the Inspector’s statement; upon which it may be observed that had legal proceedings been taken against the eldest son, who was living with his parents, and receiving 13s. 6d. a week, he might have defeated the purpose of those proceedings by marrying, and pleading his inability to aid in the maintenance of his parents.”\*

To a similar effect is the testimony of the Rev.

\* “Dispauperisation,” pp. 48, 49.

Canon Willes. "I know that in many cases people have looked with astonishment, as if they were injured, by being called upon to support those who had given them birth. It was brought to my notice the other day, that in one of our large manufacturing towns there is actually an association formed for bringing about a repeal of the law which 'most unjustly and cruelly' as they allege, calls upon children to support their parents." The Scotch Poor Law was introduced in 1845. How has it worked? "A peasantry," says Mr. McNeil Caird, "who in my recollection were sensitive in the highest degree that any of their kindred had received parish relief, now too often claim it with eagerness, if given in money, though they still look upon the poor-house as degrading." "The change," says a former overseer of an East London parish, "that is made in the character and habits of the poor by once receiving parochial relief is quite remarkable. They are demoralised ever afterwards." Now it would seem as if this demoralisation had a tendency to be hereditary. "The regular applicants for relief are generally of one family. The disease is handed down from father to son. . . . Whether in work or out of work, when they once become paupers, it can only be by a sort of miracle that they can be broken off."

The tendency, then, of the present Poor Law, both in its actual operation, and in the opinion of experienced judges, is the reverse of beneficial. It is inevitable, but it is inevitable as an evil, not as a good. On the other hand, there are some who argue that the Poor

Law has distinct social and political advantages. "We believe," writes the *Spectator*, June 15, 1878, "that the secret of the comparative placability of the English peasantry, and the little success that socialism of any formidable type has attained among them, is that the Poor Law has kept absolute starvation at least from the door of the poorest class, and has prevented the kind of scenes and the kind of sufferings which make the life of the poor one long dread of famine, and transform humility into hate." It is admitted by those who think in this way that the Poor Law is a concession to socialistic feeling, but it is urged that its influence in bridging over the gulf that separates class from class, and in creating a mutual sentiment of charity and good will, must more than neutralise any of the politically perilous views which it may seem to sanction. But how if for the mechanical charity of the State there should be substituted the living charity of the individual? How if in the place of compulsory relief—in other words, of contributions which, in the shape of rates, cause the moderately well-to-do to divest themselves of any responsibility for the poor—there could be an organised system of voluntary assistance? With the great bulk of the people it cannot be supposed that a Poor Law is an effective instrument for eliciting a sentiment of Christian charity and benevolence. Its influence, indeed, upon the human mind will at best be found like that of a snow house, which sometimes succeeds in raising the temperature up to zero. The ordinary British ratepayer is certainly disposed to feel that he



writes Sir Henry Barron, the English Secretary of Legation at Brussels, "are making progress in Belgium, it is found very difficult to induce Belgian workmen to lay by a sum for the future, so long as the *Bureaux de Bienfaisance* offers a certain provision for old age." "It is found," we read in the consular reports from Copenhagen, "that pauperism increases in proportion to funds provided for its relief, and the richest provinces have most paupers."

It is calculated that the friendly societies save the ratepayers of the United Kingdom two million pounds sterling a year. These friendly societies are the clubs of the villages, having their periodical audits and their annual festivals. They are to the English working classes in town and country what life and accidental assurance societies are to the middle class. But they are more than this. In addition to the occasional assurance of annuities for life, or payment of a lump sum at death, they guarantee also the payment of a fixed periodical sum at illness. A new element thus enters into the calculation of the actuaries who regulate the proportion of premium to policy. Not only the chances of death, but of disease or mishap, incapacitating for work, have to be estimated, and unless the rates of contributions are based upon sound calculation the society is doomed to insolvency. It is a further necessity that the funds of these societies should be judiciously and remuneratively invested. The great life assurance societies of London would not be so prosperous as some of them are if

their money was put out in the Post Office Savings Bank at  $2\frac{1}{2}$  per cent., or even in Consols at 3. Every halfpenny must in fact be productive. As a check upon such expenditure or investment, there must be periodical valuation and examination by an actuary into the position of the club. The Friendly Societies Act of 1875 made this valuation obligatory every five years. The same measure also empowered Government to appoint public accountants and actuaries to audit accounts, as well as to value the assets of these societies. These officers are now appointed. Unfortunately, the portion of the Act which relates to their remuneration and employment is of a permissive character. Clubs are allowed to select their own auditors and valuers, and this privilege may be so exercised as to rob the quinquennial valuation of its virtue. According to the tables recommended by the Actuarial Commission of the Treasury, a payment of £1 8s. 6d. a year, or 7d. a week, will be sufficient to secure to a man who joins a club in his twenty-second year 10s. a week during illness up to the age of seventy, a pension of 6s. a week afterwards, and a death benefit of £10; while for £1 18s. a year, or 9½d. a week, he can secure the same benefit, and his pension may take effect when he has fulfilled threescore and five years instead of threescore and ten.

Mr. Macdonald, the parliamentary representative of the wages-earning class, has given it as his opinion that "friendly societies may be of great use in teaching the people to dispense with the Poor Law." It is not long

ago that some Somersetshire coal-miners, when urged to join a club, refused because they "preferred the parish pay." If the alternative of membership of a friendly society had not been parish pay, but the "house," there is little doubt which would have been selected, and that the ratepayers would have been spared the burden which the west-country colliers determined deliberately to inflict. Just as it is the business of the State to offer every inducement it can, without undue interference with individual freedom, to the working classes to join these societies, and thus at the same time that it inculcates the virtue of prudence, to do what will almost certainly have the effect of reducing the burden of the rates, so may the employers of labour be expected to co-operate in this matter with the State. In Austria large employers are required to create an assistance fund for their workmen, and in England many employers have done this of their own accord. The London and South-Western Railway Company has established a friendly society to give relief in cases of sickness or death, which counts more than 3,000 members. The same principle may be seen actively recognised and operative in certain departments of professional life. There are pension funds for the Indian Military and Civil Services, to which it is compulsory to contribute. Why then, it may be asked, should it not be compulsory for the working classes to contribute to friendly societies? Why should not the employer make membership of one of these associations a condition of entering his employ?

In the first place, no employer would consent to do anything of the kind. If he were to pledge himself to such a principle, or to act on it, he would infallibly find that he was left in the lurch, and caused serious loss and inconvenience at some critical stage in the competition for labour. Secondly, were the State to insist upon such a condition as has been suggested, it would manifestly be necessary also for the State to guarantee the solvency of the society. Thirdly, if the State were to carry its prerogatives thus far, it would be an encroachment upon the sensitive spirit of English liberty but little acceptable to the English character, and calculated to promote an attitude of passive dependence on the State, entirely antagonistic to the idea of self-help.

It has before now been suggested that the responsibility of protecting the members of friendly societies should rest with the Guardians of the Poor. The proposal is open to the same objection as that of the State guarantee, and to additional objections also. It is true that to some extent the purpose, and to a great extent the effect, of these associations is to make their members independent of the rates. But it is quite certain that the patronage of the Poor Law would deter many working men with an independent spirit from joining them, and would degrade them to the resort of a pauperised residuum.

The present attitude of the law towards friendly societies supplies a curious exception to that active interference which has become the rule in many other matters of a social urgency scarcely greater. For

nearly a century, since the year 1793, friendly societies have been legislated for by Parliament. Notwithstanding all this legislation, their legal status is very little changed. The Act of 1793 left registration voluntary ; so did the Act of 1819, which, amongst other important provisions, enacted that the justices in Quarter Sessions should no longer be permitted to confirm the rules of societies until they had been approved by two persons known to be professional actuaries, or skilled in calculation. In 1827 the affairs of friendly societies were discussed before a Committee of the House of Commons. An Act passed in 1829 indicates the transition stage from local to central control, and transfers to the barrister nominated to certify the rules of savings banks, the certification of the rules of friendly societies. The supreme power was still retained by the magistrates, who ultimately confirmed or rejected the society's tables ; nor was it till 1846 that the creation of the office of Registrar of Friendly Societies removed them from the control of the justices, and established a complete system of centralisation. But registration was still permissive. Frequently, even when the rules had been registered and certified, they were not enforced. The annals of friendly societies are full of tales of the utter wretchedness brought by fraudulent management of funds upon families who had invested all their savings in them, in order that they might keep together and escape the workhouse. An Act, not without beneficial results, for better government of these institutions was passed in 1854 ; another Act in 1875, of which a competent

authority—the Rev. W. W. Edwards\*—says that, “though heralded with a vast amount of anticipatory laudation, in reality it did little or nothing to settle the difficulty of the question.” The subject, in fact, is still treated as it always has been, permissively; for registration is not compulsory, and many of the provisions of the Act are not enforced by any fine. The principle of the law—namely, that every registered society shall act openly with regard to its members and the public—is indeed admirable. But considering that very nearly one-fourth of the population—over eight millions, and that the most defenceless and impoverished part of it—are interested in these societies, and that 32,000 societies, of which 12,000 are not registered—in other words, are not subject to any kind of State control—have funds of not less than £11,000,000 sterling at their disposal, it may well be questioned whether something more should not be done. These societies, it must be remembered, are, with the exception of the Post Office Savings Bank, almost the only opportunities of the investment of capital which the working man has. They give him an income in sickness, and they give his widow enough to start her on a new way of life at his death. If the State offered the working man an alternative investment, it would be a different matter. The only alternative that it does offer is Poor Law relief. Thus the State steps in with an inducement to pauperism, but not, as it would do, if indirectly it put down rotten friendly societies, with an inducement to thrift. In

\* *Contemporary Review*, 1876.

France there exist facilities for the investment of the smallest sums in public securities or land, in England there do not. In country districts the inducements to thrift are still further minimised by the fact that the working man or woman who has a shilling or two to put by often has to go three or four miles before a Post Office Savings Bank can be found. If the State declined to interfere generally in matters relating to the personal welfare of the working man, the objection of successive Governments to compel the registration of friendly societies would be intelligible. Such compulsion, be it said, would not involve any more responsibility than the State has already taken, if responsibility it can be called, in the case of life insurance societies, which, when they are starting for the first time, it requires shall deposit £20,000 before business can be legally carried on. Again, as a matter of fact the State does, in these matters, interfere habitually. It interferes to prevent a man employing his wife and children to support him by factory labour; it compels him to send his children to school; it places certain restrictions on the sale of intoxicating liquors, of drugs and poisons, on adulteration of food. On what ground, then, can it be denied that the State has the authority to restrict the opportunities which dishonest speculators now have of cheating the working man, or how can it be said that the same guarantee which, by exacting the deposit above named, the State exacts from life insurance societies in the interests of the middle classes, it should not exact also in the interests of the lowest class of all?

In the state of New York, Mr. Edwards tells us, every insurance office is under strict Government supervision, and he recommends four reforms for application to friendly societies: first, compulsory registration; second, compulsory adoption of a limit in scales of payments and benefits; third, audit and valuation by a Government official; fourth, the winding-up of every society proved to be in a hopelessly insolvent position. How pressing these wants are, may be judged from the condition of the Manchester Unity of Odd Fellows in 1871. That society, which is a national boon, and which is a model for imitation, was found in 1871, when the Odd Fellows themselves voluntarily instituted a valuation of assets and liabilities—like that which is required from only registered societies—to have a deficiency of £1,350,000, though even then the society was in a position to discharge nearly ninety per cent. of its liabilities.

The popularity of penny banks seems to show how real is the anxiety of the working classes to save, and how genuine is the want which it supplies. In the case of one of these institutions the number of deposits during the year 1877 increased by 71,802, the amount deposited by £187,911. Forty-four additions were made to the number of branches, and in some instances applications for branches had to be refused, in consequence of the applicants living beyond the limits fixed by the articles of the association. How minute in its sums, and how large in its extent was the business done, may be seen from the fact that in twelve

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months 791,873 deposits were made, their aggregate reaching a total of £650,714. Each depositor thus must have saved on the average something less than a sovereign, and it can scarcely be doubted that but for this bank these small amounts would have found their way to the public-house till.

These things are, however, but the machinery of thrift—the machinery which, indeed, if rightly employed, will go far to minimise or stamp out pauperism, but which requires the spirit of thrift generally diffused throughout the working classes to secure its full effect. It is much that penny banks and Post Office savings banks should be as numerous as they are in England. Thrift is a virtue which, strengthened by practice, is pre-eminently inculcated by example. The English working classes are singularly quick to catch up the ways of their social superiors. They not only imitate, but they caricature. It is in matters economical as in others, the man reproduces the extravagance of the master, the maid of the mistress, the employed of the employer. Can it be said that relatively the English working classes are not as thrifty as any other portion of the population? Grant that they are a little less saving; have they not greater temptations to and excuses for improvidence. It is in the prospect of a definite reward, as a compensation for self-denial, that the inducement to small economies is to be found. This prospect the English working classes either have not, or do not sufficiently realise.

But may we not hope that the necessary reforms

are on the high road towards accomplishment? Co-operation, which will be considered in the next chapter, is as yet in its infancy, but already co-operation has worked, as we shall see, marvels. The saving which co-operation has secured to the working classes has been calculated from 10 to 20 per cent. And this economy only represents a small part of the advantages of the system, which, as will be seen from the survey of it, are quite as much moral as material.

[NOTE.—It seems fair to supplement what has been said in this chapter on the subject of the thrift or thriftlessness of the working classes with a few facts and figures of great interest and importance, given by an undoubted and experienced authority, Mr. George Howell, in an article in the *Nineteenth Century* entitled, “Are the Working Classes improvident?” “The only method,” remarks the writer, “by which the truth or the untruth of the charge laid against the working classes as to their improvidence may be arrived at, is by furnishing data as to the actual wages received and the relative cost of living, and also by bringing forward such evidence with regard to the thrift of the working man as may be shown by their savings in banks, their investments, their various provisions for old age, sickness, and trade depressions.” Mr. Howell then asks, “What are the average earnings of a workman? It is useless (he says), illogical, and unfair, to quote the current wages in any particular trade or district, without making due allowance for the inevitable deductions—such as non-employment for a month or two every year, sickness, &c. If a man earns £2 a week, and yet is liable to be out of work one month in each year, it is only right to consider that he earns £96 per annum instead of £104.” Having traced the gradual progress in the rate of wages for the last thirty years, and the corresponding variation of prices—estimating the former at 9s. 4d. a week—equal to about  $30\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. on the 30s. paid in 1847, Mr. Howell, deducting 4s. or 5s. a week for casualties, fixes the wages of a skilled operative at 35s. per week, or £91 a year. The average family of a working man numbers about five—self, wife, and three children—and thus there are five to be *housed, fed, clothed,*

*warmed, and educated, and perhaps doctored.* This involves a payment of 5s. 10d. a week for rent, or £15 3s. 4d. per annum, and 1s. 8d. per week for coal, and 6d. a week for schooling; and also 1s. a week to society or club, to which most workmen belong. After thus deducting 9s. a week from 35s., there is left 26s. with which to feed and clothe five persons, which will be done at the rate of 10s. for the man, 6s. for his wife, and 3s. for each child, leaving 1s. a week for incidental expenses. On viewing these figures there appears to be little or no room for extravagance. With regard to thrift or provision for the future, the following statistics are the best answer:—1. There are 26,087 friendly societies registered, and several unregistered, with a total of 3,404,189 members, whose aggregate funds amount to £9,336,949. 2. Loan societies, 373; members, 30,048; accumulated funds, £155,065. 3. Building societies, 396; funds, £12,580,013. 4. Provident societies, 1,163, members, 420,024; accumulated funds, £6,199,266. 5. Trade unions registered, 215; members, 277,115; funds, £391,595. 6. Savings banks: Trustees' savings banks, 463; depositors, 1,493,401, deposits, £43,283,700. Post Office savings banks, 5,488; depositors, 3,166,136; deposits (inclusive of interest), £26,996,550 10s. 3d. Railway savings banks, 9; depositors, 7,898; accumulated funds, £153,512. These are strictly confined to railway employes. The grand total shows that there are about 10,121,694 depositors, and that the accumulated funds amount to no less than £100,705,055.]

## CHAPTER XIII.

### CO-OPERATION.

Two Illustrations of the Co-operative Principle—Victoria Street, London, and Toad Lane, Rochdale—General Comparison between the Conduct of different Co-operative Stores—Feelings to which the Co-operative Principle amongst the Working Classes in England originally appealed—Nature of the Enthusiasm which it created—Views advanced at the first Co-operative Congress in 1852—Co-operative Wholesale Society—Co-operation among the Middle and Upper Classes—The Civil Service Supply Association—Its Origin, Organisation, and Progress—Other Co-operative Societies and their Development—The Civil Service Co-operative Society—The Army and Navy Co-operative Society—Effects of Co-operation upon the Labour Market—General, Social, and Moral Advantages of Co-operation—Educational Influences of the Movement—How far Co-operation is applicable to Production as well as Distribution—The Exceptional Success of the Assington Experiment—General View of Progress and Position of Co-operation.

THE two scenes which we are now about to witness are bound together by a definite connecting-link. The social and local conditions in each case may be widely different, but the principle illustrated is the same. Few greater contrasts could exist, so far as appearances are concerned, than between Victoria Street, Westminster, and Toad Lane, Rochdale. Nor are the particular buildings in the two thoroughfares, which we shall successively enter, frequented by persons between whose exterior or whose state of life much resemblance can be traced. At the same time the patrons of each are animated by a common motive, and have discovered that the end in view can be best secured by nearly

identical methods. The method is that of co-operation, and though the manner in which it is carried out in the capital and in the Lancashire manufacturing town varies, while it represents in the latter more of social advantage, and more, also, of moral enthusiasm than in the former, the different aspects of the enterprise may still not inappropriately be placed side by side. It is about three o'clock in the afternoon, and, in the course of a walk from Victoria Station towards the Houses of Parliament, down a long, gaunt street, with huge mansions, containing flats, or lawyers' offices, or the chambers of colonial and parliamentary agents, one notices, midway on the right-hand side, rows of carriages and cabs, two or three deep, drawn up in front of a handsome block of buildings. Every kind of vehicle that can be bought or hired in London is here—from the open barouche or closed brougham, with their thorough-bred horses, to the carriage jobbed by the month, or let out by the hour, as well as the hackney cab, hansom, or four-wheeler. Footmen and coachmen are stationed at the doors, through which there pass ladies and gentlemen—some on the point of transacting their business, others having completed their purchases, which are carried by servants to the purchasers' carriages.

The establishment is not only an emporium, but a lounge, a place of gossip and pleasure, as well as of business. One enters, and finds grizzled warriors seated at a table, drawing up, with much deliberation, a list of their intended purchases. Close beside there is a

young matron, new to housekeeping, whose husband has just received his promotion, and who is intent upon making a limited sum go as far as possible. Around and about these, passing to or coming from the different counters, are groups of well-dressed buyers, who have been giving orders for every sort of article that their households or drawing-rooms can need. There are many, too, who seem to have no thought of buying anything, or who, if they have fulfilled the object with which they ostensibly came hither, linger on, with no other visible aim than to meet their friends and discuss the news or scandal of the day. Precisely the same thing is going on upon the storey above, and above that again until the third or fourth floor is reached. The goods sold vary according to the elevation of the department above the level of the street. In each there is the same mixed crowd of buyers, the same social chatter, the same interchange of compliments, the same applications to the cashier to make out bills. There is also a refreshment room on the premises for the benefit of customers who may require a light lunch; or, if it be afternoon, as we are now supposing it to be, may like to sip the comforting cup of "five o'clock tea." The place, in fact, discharges not a few of the purposes of a club for ladies and gentlemen; it gratifies the prevailing passion for combining pleasure and business, and gives the customers of the store the satisfaction of knowing, that at the same time they meet their friends they are getting their wares—whether it be an ormolu clock or a jar of

pickles—at a cheaper rate and of a better quality than they could elsewhere.

Let us now turn to Toad Lane, Rochdale. The hour is seven o'clock on Saturday evening. There are swarms of factory hands, with their wives and children, passing and re-passing from one shop to another, for in Toad Lane there is not, as there is in Victoria Street, a concentration of many shops into one. All, however, belong to the same society, and the Rochdale Pioneers do a business as comprehensive in its way as that of the naval and military co-operators, or the Civil Service, in London. There are no luxurious carriages waiting outside the premises in Toad Lane, no footmen, powdered or unpowdered, standing sentry at the door, no commissionaires calling for cabs, or smart page-boys laden with parcels bringing up the rear. Though here, as in Victoria Street, there is much general conversation between the buyers, there is little loitering about, and it is easy to see that the dominant spirit of the place is one of business. At the counter of one shop there are attendants drawing treacle, packing parcels of sugar, and re-fitting the empty shelves; on the pavement outside are at least a dozen persons waiting to take their turn, and a similar spectacle may be noticed at intervals throughout the whole street. Immediately opposite the grocery store is one for drapery, where a dozen women of varying ages are selecting articles; next door but one is a still larger shop, in which huge joints of meat are being cut and sold; while in another department of the same house, flour, potatoes, and butter are being

weighed out. Close by tailors and shoemakers are attending to their customers. Next door to the butcher's shop is a watch club, and immediately adjoining this is the library, whose officers are hard at work, exchanging, renewing, and delivering books. A marked feature in the scene, and a significant commentary upon the real value of the institution, is the number of children. The working classes seldom or never send children to shops on errands of an important character, for the simple reason that they are afraid lest the sellers should impose upon their ignorance and innocence. In the stores all have confidence, and they know that no distinction of persons is made.

There are many points of difference, other than those which relate to the personnel of their patrons, between the London and the Rochdale co-operative establishments. Even the co-operative stores in London themselves are not uniformly conducted upon one principle. Though the business done by the Army and Navy Stores in Victoria Street is not as great as that of the Civil Service Supply Association, there is in the former instance more of the ordinary trading system than in the latter. It is practically open to any person to become a member of the Victoria Street establishment. At the present day, no new-comer to the Civil Service Supply Association, if he is not a civil servant, can obtain the enjoyment of all its privileges; nor, indeed, will it be easy for him to belong to them on any terms unless he is nominated by a shareholder. There are other so-called co-operative



stores in London, which have nothing whatever in their management to entitle them to the name. They are simply the enterprises of private individuals or companies, who believe that the name co-operation is one to conjure with, and who employ it as a synonym for cheapness. That co-operation has often been the cause of cheapness in other establishments, which have nothing really co-operative about them, cannot be doubted. The effect which the institution of these stores has had upon tradesmen, has redounded greatly to the advantage of all classes of buyers. They have introduced a new element of competition, and have compelled tradesmen largely to reduce their prices for ready money customers.

While every dealer at the Rochdale stores is a shareholder, there are many members of the London stores who have no vested interest in the concern whatever. They have purchased their admission ticket to it on the recommendation of a friend, who, perhaps, is a shareholder, and the only practical disadvantage at which they find themselves is, that they have no claim to participation in the profits, or to the gratuitous conveyance of their purchases to their homes. A further and very important distinction between such co-operative societies in London as those at which we have glanced and a co-operative society like the Equitable Pioneers, is that, in the case of the latter, there is none of the necessary antagonism which, in the case of the former, exists between the store and the ordinary tradesman. In London the

object of the store is to undersell the tradesman ; in the provinces, at Rochdale and elsewhere, it is not to do this, but to sell at the price current in the neighbourhood, the advantage offered by the store being, in the first place, the best goods which the money paid can command ; in the second, a strong inducement to thrift. For example, the Rochdale stores are not only an aggregate of well-supplied, well-conducted shops, but are actually or potentially savings banks as well. Every member being a shareholder, shares in an equal degree in the profits, and the only surplusage which at the end of the year there is to be divided amongst the shareholders is that to which every member is proportionately entitled. It follows that there are greater inducements to economical management in Rochdale or Halifax than in London. At either of the former places every sixpence spent upon salaries and wages represents an increase of expenditure upon the article purchased. So, no doubt, it does in London, but where all do not share, as in London they do not, in the margin of profit left outside working expenses, this fact can scarcely be practically realised with the same degree of force.

Perhaps the best way of stating the difference between co-operation, as it exists amongst the higher and the lower classes of English society, will be to say that in the former it represents the principles of expediency and economy, and nothing more ; and that in the latter it is at once associated with, and is symbolical of, a very material advance in the general

condition of the working classes. The naval or military officer, the civil servant, the nobleman, the distinguished official, a whole host of gentlemen, who, in the London season, divide their days pretty equally between their offices, clubs, and other resorts of business, fashion, or pleasure, go to the stores, because they believe, or profess to believe, that in going thither they are making their purchases, in a not disagreeable way, in the cheapest market. The doctrine which they thus recognise is one simply of personal convenience; there is no more moral fervour about the whole proceeding than there is about the calculations of a party whip in the House of Commons, while a party debate is in progress. At the establishment of the Civil Service Supply Association, the economical idea may be pronounced wholly in the ascendant; at the Army and Navy Stores, in Victoria Street, there is a strong focus of social attraction as well. In both instances it cannot be doubted that the stores are patronised by many people, especially ladies, who really like the excitement of the atmosphere, and the occupation given by shopping under exceptionally agitating conditions. Others there are who fail to find any allurements in a more pronounced degree of bustle and disturbance than they would encounter at those shops where their personal identity is not in imminent danger of being lost amidst a chaotic multitude of customers. Yet these in many instances go to the stores, for the simple reason that they know that by purchasing for

ready money their goods in person they are not charged, as in some shops they practically are, interest on the outstanding accounts of credit customers, or the cost of the commission which, in the shape of Christmas gratuity or quarterly fee, the tradesman often pays the head servants of large private establishments. But even amongst the hard-worked civil servants of the Crown there cannot be anything like the consuming enthusiasm which is the soul of the co-operative movement amongst the labouring classes. The truth is, that the planes on which co-operation moves in either instance differ as greatly as does the social condition of its votaries. To live cleanly, soberly, and honestly is confessedly regarded as a mark of distinction amongst the working classes. When one goes higher in the social scale, the conventional assumption is that it is no distinction at all. Thus it is with co-operation, thrift, and the power of responsible management. With the well-to-do they are either not exceptional virtues at all, or if they are, it is polite to ignore the fact. With the working man it is admitted by his condescending patrons—who might sometimes be his pupils—that they constitute a distinct claim to admiring recognition.

Nothing more need here be indicated than the chief principles, or the central episodes and stages, of that co-operative movement, which has a history and a literature of its own.\* In estimating the

\* "The History of Co-operation," in two volumes, by Mr. Jacob Holyoake; a very valuable work, to which I am much indebted in this chapter.

influences of English co-operation, it is necessary to remember that it had its origin in something very like fanaticism, and that its first apostles held out to their followers an ideal too visionary for actual attainment. It is these historical associations which have given to the movement that degree of moral impetus without which it could scarcely have been driven onward as rapidly as it has been. If the co-operation in England had known no other motive than the economical, if the only appeal which it had made to its votaries was based upon unsentimental considerations of supply and demand, it could never have acquired so strong a hold upon the working classes. A fanatical or an exaggerated enthusiasm lies with Englishmen at the bottom of every great popular cause; the fanaticism passes away, but a genuine residuum of energy remains. Long before the Rochdale Equitable Pioneers opened their store in Toad Lane in 1844 with £20 worth of goods, Owen had made his experiment, and that experiment had been generally stigmatised as a failure. But if its influences are prospectively estimated, it cannot be considered as a failure in any way, for it really generated the enthusiasm without which co-operation would never have been taken up. Then it was that the doctrines which Owen held, and which he endeavoured to translate into practice, were destined to yield a posthumous harvest.

Just as in the human constitution, selfishness and sympathy are the two mutually compensating principles, so has co-operation acted in civil society at large as the

counter-influence to the principle of trades unionism. Competition, it was said in the *Leader* newspaper thirty years ago, as developing in England, must destroy in the end both family life and industrial prosperity. It was this apprehension which, quite as much as the obvious economical doctrine that it would be to the advantage of the working classes to buy their wares in the cheapest market, caused several gentlemen and clergymen of the Church of England energetically to promote the movement. These claimed support for it on the ground that it represented nothing less than the practical application of Christianity to the purposes of trade and industry. In the official reports of the earlier meetings of the Central Co-operative Society—the Association for Promoting Industrial and Provident Societies—one finds resolutions couched in language whose sincerity is above suspicion, and which sufficiently testifies to a high elevation of moral aim. Thus at the conference held on the state of the society in Great Castle Street, London, July, 1852, it was unanimously resolved by its delegates “that this conference entreats all co-operative establishments . . . to sell all articles for exactly what they know them to be, and to abstain . . . from the sale of articles known to be adulterated, even if demanded by their customers.” The following year it was formally laid down that the principles of the association were—“That human society is a body consisting of many members, not a collection of warring atoms. That true workmen must

be fellow-workers, and not rivals. That a principle of justice, and not of selfishness, must govern exchanges."

Nor did more prosaic and practical points fail to receive their due measure of consideration and discussion. Chief amongst these was the payment of managers and of labourers employed by associations. The resolution was arrived at—that "the principle of giving a share of the profits to all who had shared in the work was essentially just," and that if this were not done the chief characteristic of co-operative societies would be lost. It was upon this occasion that at the festival which followed the conference, the president, the late F. D. Maurice, observed that "human nature, Christianity, and co-operation, alike taught that men must be controlled by moral law, and until that was acknowledged the continual fighting of man against man, employer against employed, would never cease. As soon as the law was proclaimed and observed that men should help one another, and live for one another, and that so only could they live for themselves, society would be kept in union by a power mightier than selfishness, industrial associations would be the instruments of the moral education, translating those principles into the business of practical life." Twelve years later, the machinery of co-operation was supplemented by the promotion of a Co-operative Wholesale Society, to which it was intended that local stores should be affiliated, procuring thence the articles that they retailed to their customers. Starting with a capital of £999, it made a small loss of £39 in its first half-year, followed in the next by

a profit of £306. The result of its fourteen years trading shows that on the 12th of January, 1878, there were 844 provincial societies which had or have accounts with the Co-operative Wholesale Society. These societies purchased in the last quarter of the year 1877, £680,811 worth of goods for the three departments in which the central society is now organised, viz.—grocery and provisions, drapery, boots and shoes, and furniture. The cash receipts for the same period from all sources amounted to £1,415,580, and the business done in the year to £2,827,052. Again, in 1866, two years after it started, the Wholesale Society established branches for purchase of produce at Tipperary, at Killmallock in 1868, at Limerick in 1869, at Clonmel in 1874, at New York in 1876, and at Cork in 1877. Besides the Manchester establishment, there exist local centres in London, Newcastle, and Liverpool, a biscuit factory at Crumpsall, a shoe factory at Leicester, and soap works in Durham. The Wholesale Society has, in fact, become the commercial backbone of the movement, and is a crucial instance of the capacity of the working classes for managing large affairs. It was at the time that this society was established that a co-operative movement in another direction took place, and that the attempt which we have already seen to organise consumption for the upper and professional classes on the same lines was made.

The Civil Service Supply Association, which now does the largest co-operative business among the middle and the upper classes of the country, was



established in 1866. Its origin was simple, and in a great degree the result of a happy accident. The excessive retail price charged for tea induced a gentleman in the Post Office to obtain a chest of it on wholesale terms. This he kept in a cellar below the office, and distributed its contents as wanted to a few of his personal friends in the department. Comparison of quality and price not only was followed by a much larger demand for the article than it was convenient to supply in this primitive fashion, but brought into prominent relief the advantages that would be secured if the system were extended. In consequence, a few of the officials combined to start the Post Office Supply Association, its members being strictly limited to employés of the department. The project was found to work so advantageously that very soon it was determined to diffuse its advantages throughout the entire service; and in February, 1866, the Civil Service Supply Association (Limited) was established under "The Industrial and Provident Societies Act, 1862." The capital was limited to £2,250 in 4,500 shares of 10s. each, and although modifications have been frequently entertained the amount of capital stock still remains the same. From its commencement the association has progressed steadily. The sales, which in the first year (1866) amounted to £21,322, increased in the next to £83,405, in 1877 had passed a million sterling, in 1878 reached a total of £1,390,000. Nor did the fact that in the second year of the enterprise two of the directors seceded and successfully set on foot

another store appreciably arrest this rapid development. On this large turnover the gross profit (*i.e.*, the difference in the price paid to the producer and that charged to the member) averages  $8\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. Of this percentage  $6\frac{1}{2}$  to 7 per cent. goes in working expenses, leaving  $1\frac{1}{2}$  to 2 per cent. for profit to the shareholders. The expenses of working, estimated in the dealings of 1878, come to no less than £90,000; but when it is explained that the amount paid in that year for salaries of the employés was very little short of £70,000, some notion will be formed of the vastness of the organisation and the economy of its management. In this connection it may be said that not only is everything, as a matter of course, bought for prompt cash, but the producer is invariably treated with directly. This system, when combined with that of keeping the percentage of profits at the level named, gives rise to certain anomalies. The producers of certain articles, known throughout the world, whatever advantage in price they may be willing to concede the association in consideration of the extent of the transactions, stipulate that their goods shall not be resold at less than certain market quotations. Hence, on such goods a very large profit is made, and, as a consequence, the prices of other articles are reduced so as to equalise the percentage of profit throughout the department. On the other hand, there are well-known goods which cannot be sold at prices below those quoted by retail traders, who selling such articles without profit seek to impress their customers with

the belief that their prices generally are on a level with those of the co-operative stores. As an example, the familiar custom of selling sugar at or under cost is not adopted by the association, whose quotations for this article are consequently comparatively high. But in all articles of food the purchaser at the stores has the great advantage of a guarantee of purity. It is a special feature of these institutions that everything is examined by a qualified analyst, permanently employed for the purpose.

In the sum named as the annual turnover, no estimate has been included of the sales made by the tradesmen affiliated to the society who deal directly with the members, allowing on purchases a discount varying from 10 to 25 per cent. It is calculated that these come to between £3,000,000 and £4,000,000 annually, there being about 400 firms so affiliated, some of which have individually sold more than £60,000 worth of goods in a given twelve months. The disposition on the part of the shopkeepers to avail themselves of the privilege does not diminish; but of the many desirous of admittance to the association's list, only those who are able to satisfy a most rigid scrutiny of their standing are successful, and more than half the applicants are as a rule rejected. It should be added that some of the very first West End firms have shown no wish to identify themselves with the movement.

The direction is composed of fifteen gentlemen, who each receive as remuneration 200 guineas per annum.

They are exclusively members of the Civil Service, and take an active part in the management of the stores, generally attending every afternoon, when they divide themselves into committees for different purposes. To the secretary, who acts also as general manager, falls the chief superintendence, and he has directly under and responsible to him the departmental managers—the latter being invariably highly competent men, in receipt of salaries varying from £300 to £600 per annum. It will be obvious that the original capital of the association would be totally inadequate to work a business of this extent, and which primarily turns on cash payments. The necessary means are provided by accumulations of profits. The reserve fund to August, 1874, showed such an accumulation to the extent of £93,205; and a later one, to June 30th, 1878, called the guarantee account, an additional sum of £103,865. If to these two sums be added the capital stock, the total is within a fraction of £200,000, one moiety of which is invested in buildings, the other available as working capital. The question of a division in whole or part of these accumulated profits amongst the shareholders has been throughout and is still a difficulty. The accumulation to August, 1874, was set apart, as has been shown, because the opinion of eminent counsel concurred that it could not be distributed. As the matter now stands, it is contemplated to create additional fully-paid shares to represent the amount of the accumulations for allotment to the present shareholders. The original 10s. shares are transferable to

qualified persons in the same way as any ordinary share, and consequently have a high value, which will be considerably higher when a solution of this question is formed, and current profits can be paid in dividends.

Naturally, the association has had many followers in the path which it has struck out. The operations of even the most successful of these have not in any way impeded the progress of the original society, which numbered on December 31st, 1878, 36,000 members, of whom 23,000 pay annually 2s. or 5s., the remainder consisting of shareholders and their special nominees. The Civil Service Co-operative Society was originally formed, as has been said, by the secession of some directors of the Supply Association. Its offices are in the Haymarket, and its organisation and general features are identical with those of the society of which it is an offshoot. In the first year of its career the turnover was £15,000, in 1878 £505,000. The number of members is at present 13,000, and it should perhaps be observed that these, whether share or ticket holders, are strictly limited to qualified persons. The original capital, as in the other society, is extremely limited, being nominally £5,000, of which only £2,000 is paid up, and in the same way it finds its working funds from accumulated profits. On 31st December, 1878, those placed to the reserve fund amounted to £75,000, of which comparatively a small portion only is invested in buildings. The scheme which the original association has in view has already been partly carried

out by its younger sister. The reserve fund has been apportioned in bonus shares amongst the shareholders, but as yet, it is understood, the payment of a dividend on these new shares is only under consideration. The average net profit is the same as that realised by the Supply Association; the working expenses are perhaps fractionally higher, but not more so than might be expected from the cost of the staff of a more limited business.

The progress made by the Army and Navy Co-operative Society is not less proportionately rapid. The sales during the first year of its existence amounted to £130,280; during the seventh year, that which ended January, 1879, they reached a total of more than a million and a half. In all, during this septennial period the sales exceeded considerably five millions, and the gain to members of the association must be computed at not less than one million. The dividend paid to shareholders in this society is only five per cent., and the surplus funds are devoted to a constant reduction of prices. If we are to consider the effect of this and kindred institutions not only upon their members, but on the community at large, two things are clear: in the first place, the money saved is not lost to circulation, but diverted into other channels, though sometimes, perhaps, of less productive expenditure; in the second place, there is the same demand for labour under the co-operative régime as there would be if the monopoly of the tradesmen had never been challenged. Many of the amusements.

and luxuries of life which were inaccessible to the possessors of fixed incomes, so long as they paid credit prices for the necessities of life, are now placed within their reach, and there is pocket-money to spare for amusements and indulgences—the concert, the theatre, the hire of cabmen and gardeners. As regards the relations between co-operative stores and national industry, there is in the former plenty of employment for the latter. There are heads and foremen of departments who but for the stores would, no doubt, have set up as tradesmen on their own account—as a matter of fact, many have been tradesmen. Further, to some extent these associations co-operate not merely in the work of distribution, but of production as well. The Civil Service Supply Association has long made its own drugs, chemicals, and a few other articles. The Army and Navy has gone much further in that direction, and has large workshops for the manufacture of portmantaus, dressing-bags, purses, and other leather goods, tin-work, japanned ware, cabinets, as well as printing and die-sinking works. In all, employment is thus provided for close upon 2,000 hands. “The society,” says the secretary, “has been compelled to adopt this expedient by the difficulty, and almost in some instances impossibility, of procuring really sound and good articles that could be confidently warranted to its members, owing to the system of scamping and concealing defects. The results have quite kept pace with the most sanguine expectations. The prices have been reduced, the members are satisfied, and the working men, many

of them the best in their respective trades, are well content. As an illustration of this it may be related that a director conversing with one of them a few days ago inquired how he liked his employment, and received the reply 'Very much.' 'Why so?' he then asked. 'Because, sir, I have regular work. Before I came here I made bags which I sold to a factor. He would put on a large profit and sell them to a shopkeeper, and before they reached the regular customers my price was more than doubled. And then I often had two or three idle days at a time, as I could not sell my work. But now, owing to the small profit put on by the stores, I suppose there are a hundred bags sold where there used not to be ten; and I have regular employment and no idle time.' 'But how do you like the rule which prevents beer being taken into the workshops?' 'Well, sir, I didn't like it at first, but now I am used to it, and it has saved me a lot of money.' '\*

There is, however, another side to this particular question. While co-operative manufacture secures the immense advantage of a uniform excellence in quality, the means at the command of the larger manufacturers, their experience and personal interest, enable them to produce goods which offer little margin for competition.

Independently of the great economical boon which co-operation in distribution has been to the working classes, it has brought with it moral, intellectual, and

\* See an article by Mr J. H. Lawson, entitled "Co-operative Stores," a reply to shopkeepers, in the *Nineteenth Century*, February, 1879.



political advantages of the highest value. It has taught working men how to act together, to differ on details without disagreeing as to principle, to dissent without mutual separation, and, in spite of sundry divergences of opinion, steadily to combine together with a common purpose in view. The periodical meetings of the shareholders in these stores are sometimes agitated by stormy debates, but the discussion ends in a schism far less frequently than in the practical recognition of the truth that toleration is a necessity of life. Again, all efforts at self-improvement and self-reform, having an elevating tendency, co-operation, as belonging to this class of enterprise, has raised the views of, and implanted healthy ambition among the labouring population. "The improved condition," writes one of the chief leaders of the co-operative movement, "of our members is apparent in their dress, bearing, and freedom of speech. You would scarcely believe the alteration made in them by their being connected with a co-operative society." "The whole atmosphere," says Mr. Holyoake, "is honest. Those who serve neither hurry, finesse, nor flatter; they have no interest in chicanery; they have but one duty to perform—that of giving fair measure, full weight, and a pure article." Teetotalers recognise in the store an agency of incalculable worth for teaching the virtues of sobriety. Husbands who never knew what it was to be out of debt, and wives who previously never had a spare sixpence in their pockets, now go to market—the market being their own property—

with well-filled purses, and with a belief in their own capacities to ameliorate their condition. "Many married women," continues Mr. Holyoake, "become members because their husbands will not take the trouble, and others join the store in self-defence, to prevent the husband from spending their money in drink. Many single women have accumulated property in the store, which becomes a certificate of their conjugal worth, and young men in want of prudent helpmeets consider that to consult the books of the store is the best means of directing their selection." Briefly, a share in a co-operative store is calculated to give its holder a consciousness of some definite aim and purpose in life. Every member of the society is something of a capitalist; the share has a definite mercantile value; and, over and above that, there are the dividends, paid quarterly, on the purchases.

The co-operative movement has also taught the working classes of England what mutual confidence can do. With few exceptions, the business of these stores is conducted upon the strictest ready-money principles. When societies have allowed credit they have often been wrecked, and the mischief which one such failure has done to the entire movement can scarcely be exaggerated. The trust which the working classes now repose in their stores has received striking and sometimes rather pathetic illustrations. Mr. Holyoake tells the story of a shopkeeper who came to a woman, a member of the Equitable Pioneers, admonishing her to draw out the £40 which she had in

the society at once, as it was sure to break. The answer was, "Well, if it does break it will break with its own; it has all been saved out of my profits; all I have it has given me."

The educational value which these stores possess is not only moral and social, but literary and intellectual. While they have united the working classes in beneficent efforts for their own improvement, they have generated a new sense of citizenship, they have even been utilised as a machinery for providing instruction of the higher kind for their members. To the reading-rooms and lending libraries—such as we have seen in the course of our visit to the Equitable Pioneers in Toad Lane—there have been added classes in French, science, and art. Only in a few instances, however, are these co-operative societies doing a distinctly educational work, and it may be doubted how far, in view of the numerous independent educational agencies, such as university extension, lecture societies, institutes, and the ladies' improvement associations that exist in Leeds, Birmingham, and other towns—associations, as the name implies, for teaching the women of the working classes the rudiments of household economy and domestic hygiene—it is practicable that these further responsibilities should be at all generally assumed.

As to the future of co-operation in England, there are two distinct sets of opinions. On the one hand, it is maintained that it is not likely to render any fresh specific service; that in having supplied the

working population, as well as their social superiors with an exceedingly effective machinery for the economical distribution of the necessities and luxuries of life, it has done all that could reasonably be expected; that if to this we add its success in inculcating the virtues of frugality and thrift, we have entirely exhausted the list of its possible good works. On the other hand, experienced enthusiasts like Mr. Thomas Hughes, and others, who have made co-operation their special study, are persuaded that the movement, if not in its infancy, is still in its youth, and that there are before it great opportunities of usefulness as yet undeveloped. The prime question is, whether it is in the nature of things possible, that the principle of co-operation should be applied to production with anything like the same results realised in the case of distribution. The experiment, indeed, has often been made, but scarcely with sufficient success in any considerable number of cases to justify the assertion that the co-operative principle is destined to solve the problem of labour *versus* capital. The mutual distrust, which is too often the characteristic of the labouring classes, and which offered serious obstacles to the successful working of the co-operative stores in their earlier days, has not yet been overcome in the matter of co-operative production. A fair day's wage for a fair day's work is their motto, and the working man prefers to labour for an employer, whom he holds responsible for his pay, and from whom he knows that, when the day's work is done, he will receive it, to

engaging in a venture with his fellows, on the chance that success in their efforts, in the more or less remote future, will enable them handsomely to remunerate themselves. Thus it is that when co-operative mills have been started, each worker, being entitled to share equally in the profits, they have generally ended by becoming joint-stock companies, in which only a very limited number have been proprietors.

In one notable instance the co-operative principle has been applied with the happiest results to agriculture. Fourteen years before the commencement of the enterprise of the Rochdale Pioneers, a Suffolk squire, Mr. Gurden, of Assington, selected sixty acres of land of medium quality, furnishing them with a homestead, and letting them out to a company of shareholders—all taken from the class of farm-labourers—who put £3 apiece into the concern, while Mr. Gurden himself advanced a sum of £400, without interest, on loan. In 1867, the number of shareholders had risen from fifteen to twenty-one, the land held had increased from 60 to 130 acres, and each of the shares was worth £50. In addition to this, the company had paid back Mr. Gurden all his money, and the stock and implements on the farm, the former consisting of six horses, four cows, 110 sheep, thirty or forty pigs, were the exclusive property of the co-operators. The rent of the land was £200 per annum, and the farm was held on a forty-four years' lease. The business was and is managed by a committee of four, some of whose members could not even read or write, but the practical

direction of the farm rests with the bailiff—himself a co-operator—who is paid a shilling a week above the ordinary rate of wages.

Even if it be held that the success of the Assington experiment is, in the nature of things, exceptional, and that co-operative production upon any large scale is impracticable, all such undertakings may claim the credit of an undoubtedly beneficial tendency, and are necessarily calculated to promote an improvement in the relations between capital and labour. Workmen who take part in such enterprises acquire the habit of looking at industrial problems from the employers' point of view, gradually perceive that there are many difficulties in trade and manufacture to which they have hitherto been strangers, and that to such questions as piece-work, overtime, hours of labour, there are two sides. Thus productive co-operation, not less than, as we have seen, distributive, may be regarded as the compensating principle to unionism.

On the whole, it is well that we should estimate co-operation rather by the work it has actually done than by that which sanguine visionaries consider it may still accomplish. It is enough to know that it has organised and elevated the life of the masses, has immensely improved their social position, has implanted in them the germs of a new morality, and a disposition which is fruitful of promise in the future relations of capital and labour. Further, co-operation has made the struggle for existence easier, existence itself happier and better for half

a million of Englishmen, in the course of twenty-five years. A sum of upwards of £5,000,000 of capital forms the stock of the working-class co-operative societies. These societies not merely sell goods of the best quality, on reasonable terms, but, in many cases, as we have seen, have been accompanied by the institution of libraries, wholesale bank and trading societies, conferences and congresses, and in some cases productive concerns. It is further to be remembered that since 1852—when the first Industrial and Provident Societies Act was passed—all this development has been perfectly natural and spontaneous, has taken place in the open market, subject to the full and keen competition of other industrial organisations. If the believers in an agency which has done thus much think that more than is likely to be witnessed yet remains for it to do, the delusion is at least pardonable, and if these are called fanatics, it must be remembered that it was fanatics with whom co-operation had its first beginnings.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### CRIMINAL ENGLAND.

Definition of Crime—Difficulty of arriving at Exact Estimate of Amount of Crime—Figures apt to mislead, yet much has been done during the Century—Direction of Reform—Prisons, Police, Reformatories—Constitution of the Army of Crime—Categories of Criminals—Congenital Crime—High Flights of Modern Burglars—Habitual Criminals—Prevention of Crimes Act—Accidental Criminals—Colossal Criminals—Police Organisation: its Defects—Recent Reforms—Machinery of Detection—New System in London detailed—Treatment of Criminals after Apprehension—Imprisonment—Local Prisons and New Organisation described—Penal Servitude—Convict Prisons described—Discharged Prisoners—Difficulties they have to face—Assistance given by Prisoners' Aid Societies, and the Results these probably achieve.

CRIME in the body politic is often justly compared to some mysterious ailment, inveterate in the human frame. Just as the extent and ramifications of the one are apt to defy medical diagnosis, so do statisticians, sociologists, and philanthropists differ about the other. They cannot agree as to the origin of crime; they question results which figures might be supposed indisputably to prove; they join issue upon methods of treatment, and have each their favourite panacea. Some there are who consider crime an inalienable birthright. According to this view thieving and wrong-doing are transmitted from generation to generation, and if we would eliminate them we must segregate the dangerous classes, and reduce their power of reproduction to its lowest term. Others are satisfied to deal with the



infant criminal, and hope to eradicate the inherited taint before it has acquired concrete proportions, by removing the bantling from sinister influences when still susceptible of improvement. A third and very numerous school do not despair of reformation even when the criminal is full grown and hardened in his career, and preserving their faith unimpaired in moral influences, continue to profess a belief that prisons properly managed will gradually diminish crime. Upon the actual statistics of crime there are also many opinions. To the official mind the figures published in parliamentary papers may be convincing enough. Columns innumerable, carefully compiled and calculated, prove to demonstration that although the population of the kingdom steadily grows there is no corresponding increase in crime. On the other hand, many deny the soundness of that position. Figures, they are ready to admit, cannot lie, but they may mislead. It is not sufficient to show that the number of indictable offences diminishes from year to year; it must be proved that every crime has been detected and every criminal brought to justice. Is it not the fact that many offenders escape scot free? that even the crimes they commit remain unknown long after their perpetration? Is it not also undoubtedly true that honest folk often submit tamely to injury and depredation sooner than be further mulcted in heavy sums to carry out prosecutions whereof the expense, it may be urged, should fall upon the State?

Where views and opinions are so various and

conflicting, it might seem at first difficult to come to any conclusion upon the general question. But if we can once clear ourselves of the intricacies of mere detail, and, unbiassed by partisan spirit, take a calm and comprehensive survey of the subject, we shall arrive at certain broad facts which will immensely facilitate the task. The actual condition of crime and the measures which deal with it may not be as yet absolutely satisfactory, but it cannot be denied that criminal legislation generally has improved vastly since the commencement of the present century. It may be that the prevention of crime, the removal of temptations to commit it, and its treatment in its first beginnings, have not yet reached the scientific stage ; that the machinery of detection is still imperfect and uncertain ; that the theory and practice of repression, the pains and penalties, retributory or deterrent, imposed to maintain the majesty of the law, continue, in spite of earnest endeavours to understand them, illogical and incomplete. Be it so ; it is still certain that in all these matters we have made enormous strides in recent years. Our penal code has lost its ancient savage and ruthless character. It is not so long ago that the theft of a spoon was enough to hang a man, and that after every assize the gallows were loaded with victims guilty of the most venial offences. Little less barbarous was the system of secondary punishment meted out to those who escaped the capital sentence of the law. It was underlaid by the same principle of extirpation. Transportation beyond the seas was established.

as a means of ridding the community of its criminals for as long a time as possible, perhaps for ever. Never was a more anomalous and inconsistent scheme of penal repression devised. It was most unequal in its incidence. Some suffered severely, others were rapidly transformed into millionnaires. The punishment, again, such as it was, was inflicted at so great a distance from home that it failed to act as a warning upon those who remained behind. Presently, with increased means of intercommunication, the penalty of expatriation ceased to be effective, till at last, as the colonies themselves progressed towards material wealth and prosperity, the strange spectacle was seen of honest artisans emigrating of their own accord to spots where felons were also relegated for their sins. Anomalies such as these have now altogether disappeared. Transportation has been replaced by penal servitude, and that the whole scheme of imprisonment and gaol management is certain in its operations and fairly effective is shown by the results it obtains. Equally marked have been the changes and reforms in police organisation. The existing elaborate machinery, which embraces every corner of the kingdom, which in England and Wales alone employs some thirty thousand men, and costs a couple of millions a year, is barely half a century old. People who, not too gratefully, accept the ubiquitous policeman of to-day as an established institution, should compare him and the system of which he is the exponent with the ancient Charlie or the Bow Street runner of the past. It is no longer necessary to raise

the hue and cry in order to bring great criminals to justice ; soldiers do not now act as thief-catchers, nor is it often that they are called out in aid of the civil power. The prevention of crime, again, may be a difficult problem which will remain unsolved for many centuries, but exceedingly praiseworthy efforts at its solution have been made in recent years. It is coming to be more generally understood that crime must be dealt with in the rudimentary stage. To reform hardened offenders has proved almost impossible, but their offspring with care may be preserved from contaminating influences and turned into the right path. Much has been already accomplished in this direction by reformatory and industrial schools, the number of which are increasing from day to day. Through them it may yet be possible to cut off the supply which feeds and keeps alive the great army of crime still existing in our midst ; a vast force of wrong-doers warring constantly with society, achieving few successes, suffering many reverses, but exhibiting a vitality equally deplorable and tenacious.

This army is strangely constituted, and very variously recruited. There are many categories of criminals. Some are born criminals ; some achieve crime ; others have crime thrust upon them. The wretched urchin, whether nameless or owning a known parentage, who first sees the light in the purlieu of Whitechapel, in Seven Dials, or Drury Lane, takes in thievish and other evil propensities with his mother's milk. He learns to look upon the well-to-do classes as his natural prey.

He is taught to reverence the successful depredator as a glorious being ; to despise the policeman—the “copper,” in his own slang—as his natural foe. His education, except in the nefarious processes of the profession which with him is hereditary, is utterly neglected. He grows up with ideas of right and wrong not so much perverted as non-existent. As soon as he is able to move his fingers or act for himself he joins the seminary of some modern Fagin, and in the companionship of the Artful Dodger, rapidly passes through the curriculum, choosing at its close the career in which he continues for the rest of his life. He soon becomes familiar with all the ups and downs of his precarious profession. For a time he may enjoy immunity, may remain unknown to the police, and with this continuous opportunity of plying his trade, he may pass a year, perhaps several years, in comparative comfort, doing no work, and yet receiving an abundance of ill-gotten wages. At this epoch he consorts with his “fañcy” of the opposite sex, and enters into a *quasi*-matrimonial partnership, which results in the perpetuation of his species by children who will, unless a special Providence intervene, follow in his footsteps. Sooner or later he falls, as he euphemistically puts it, into trouble. It may be his evil luck to become familiarised with the inside of a gaol even in his tenderest years ; he may long escape capture, but sooner or later he is certain to come within the grip of the law, and once a gaol-bird, a gaol-bird he generally continues to the end of his days.

To reclaim such unfortunate Ishmaelites as these in

the earlier stages of their downward progress is the praiseworthy object of numerous missions, refuges, and other reformatory institutions, which silently and with but little show, are now working strenuously amongst us. What measure of success attends their estimable efforts cannot be very accurately determined. It is at least certain that the training-ships and industrial schools return annually to the general population many thousands of lads and girls, who have been transformed from vagabonds of the most unpromising material into decent creatures, weaned of their predatory instincts, and willing to work honestly for their daily bread. These numbers, however, represent but a fraction of the whole mass of criminality from which they have been redeemed. The large balance which remains continues unreclaimed, and passes from bad to worse with rapid strides. The pickpocket and the area sneak, who are the rank and file of the criminal profession, if they display proper aptitudes, soon promote themselves to its higher walks. That strangely developed astuteness, the fertile brains and nimble fingers which are such marked characteristics of the dangerous classes, serve them in good stead when they come to be engaged in larger operations, playing for bigger stakes, and risking longer periods of forfeited liberty upon each throw. The patient and minute care which the habitual burglar bestows upon his plans is worthy of the great general preparing or prosecuting an important campaign. He approaches his quarry by circuitous routes; gathers information from every available source, undermines

insidiously the honesty, or boldly secures the co-operation, of the servants of the establishment which he has marked down as his prey. He does not attempt to pluck the apple till it is ripe, and by that time all his arrangements have been carefully matured. He has decided upon the best plan of committing the deed. If the job be one which, for obvious reasons, he does not wish to execute personally, the services of a comrade, an equally adroit cracksman, not so well known in the neighbourhood, are secured. The light vehicle—a tax-cart, with a fast-trotting pony—is ready to transfer the booty rapidly from the scene of action to a more distant spot, where the scent is weak or suspicion not yet aroused. Chief of all, a convenient “fence,” or receiver of stolen goods, is advised of the approaching coup; his melting-pot is ready to turn the plate into “white soup,” his emissaries wait only his orders to make themselves scarce with the jewels, which cannot be disposed of nearer than Vienna or Amsterdam. Thus from the first conception of the robbery, through all the preparations which have preceded its committal, to the skill displayed in execution and the subsequent astute cunning of the agents employed to remove all traces and destroy every clue, the whole affair has been managed in a masterly and a thoroughly artistic fashion. It is the perfection thus visible in the plans of modern burglars that has led to those repeated successes on a large scale which will explain how at certain seasons a whole country side is devastated by these human pests; how mansion after mansion, country

house after country house, can be ransacked with impunity, and in the teeth of the local police; how in London, in the broad daylight, and in busy thoroughfares, enterprising thieves can enter and despoil private dwelling-houses under the very noses of their owners. It may also account for other mysterious and still undetected affairs; may explain how the jewel-box of a countess can be abstracted under the eyes of servants and officials at a great London terminus; how a world-renowned picture may be spirited away from a well-watched and strongly-guarded picture-gallery in the very heart of the West End.

But it is not only as a burglar on a large scale, whether top-sawyer and chief, or merely an individual unit in a wide confederacy and the trusted agent of others, that the greatest criminals nowadays achieve success. There are other methods of rising to eminence in the nefarious trade. Although continually beaten up and hunted from pillar to post by the police, numbers of clever rascals who sit still themselves contrive to do a roaring trade upon the active misdeeds of less experienced rogues. These are they who employ pickpocket and burglar as catspaws to pull the chestnuts out of the fire. The receiver of stolen goods, whatever their description—handkerchiefs, milk cans, forged bills, or bank notes embezzled—does more to foster crime than those who actually practise it. But although infinitely more criminal, he often escapes scot free. Justice may in the long run overtake him, but not before he has had



opportunities of amassing considerable wealth. How far-reaching and cunningly laid are the nets spread by the experts of this branch of crime, is seen as often as their evil practices are discovered and laid bare. It is then discovered that some master-mind has woven a web and planned schemes upon a gigantic scale. In a very notorious case which occupied the attention of the public in 1877—that of the Long Firm, it was found that the fraternity embraced all manner of men and women in all parts of the country, that operations of unusual magnitude were manipulated by rogues with great financial skill and uncommon aptitudes for business, and that the traffic had prospered undetected and unchecked for several consecutive years. The same breadth of treatment, accompanied by minute knowledge and mastery over details, were exhibited by the Transatlantic forgers, who in 1873 committed frauds upon the Bank of England, which, if undetected, would have involved the loss of hundreds of thousands of pounds.

But it is not given to all to succeed, although many conspicuous examples may be quoted of successful crime. These are the leaders and generals; there remain the common men, the rank and file of the army of crime, who have not possessed originally the talent to rise, or who through bad luck or bad management have gravitated still farther downwards, and whose misdeeds are of a more prosaic and common-place character. Their thieving, and their mal-practices generally when they act for themselves, are

always on a second-rate scale ; if they fly at higher game it is as the tools or instruments of others, and in such cases luck seldom brings them more than a tithe of the proceeds, while they have often to bear the whole brunt of failure. Still, whatever their degree and precedence in the order of iniquity, they all belong to the class of habitual criminals. That is an alarmingly numerous force. There are some 40,000 thieves and depredators continually at large ; of the 23,000 persons apprehended annually on suspicion of indictable crimes, and of whom about 14,000 are committed for trial, nearly half come under this category, as do many thousands and thousands of the half million people summarily convicted every year. It is with this race of reprobates that our gaols and convict establishments are principally filled ; it is they who are the objects of unremitting solicitude on the part of the police, whether living prosperously in the suburbs, or congregating in thieves' kitchens in the East End. They are all more or less familiar to the police, and if "wanted" can generally be produced without loss of time. It is on their account, and to facilitate their ready identification, that huge ledgers, known as the Habitual Criminals' Register, are kept with admirable care and minuteness at the Home Office, and posted up from day to day. Against these outlaws severe enactments have recently been made. The law known as the Prevention of Crimes Act is directed mainly against habitual crime ; not only does it lay down that a repetition of offences brings those who commit them

within the definition and liable to the penalties of habitual criminals, but it provides for such subsequent supervision as may watch over possible depredators and keep them in check. If none of these measures have as yet appreciably diminished the number of habitual offenders, it must be admitted that as yet only a short time has elapsed since their introduction, and that it is still too soon to look for decisive results.

Although the foregoing categories of criminals account for a large proportion of the whole number, there remains a considerable fraction of evil-doers in whom the taint is neither hereditary nor habitual, but who represent distinct types of crime peculiar to the present day. These are the accidental, the almost involuntary criminal; those also who, cursed from the beginning with a weak moral fibre, have gradually succumbed to temptation, and degenerated from bad to worse. That foolish spirit of social competition, which permeates even the lower middle classes, and which shows itself in unnecessary ostentation and culpable extravagance, has been at the bottom of much misery and mischief. The small-salaried clerk, or the struggling tradesman, is egged on by his wife and daughters, who are eager to erect their heads above their neighbours, and live beyond their means. When evil days come upon him, surrounded by difficulties and harassed by importunate claims, the lapse into dishonesty is unhappily only too easy. He may make a desperate effort to retrieve his fortunes by specula-

tions. If he can find a stock-broker to trust him he may try his hand in Capel Court on a small scale. More probably he puts his trust in betting men, and hopes for a big windfall from backing the right horse. As these dangerous expedients probably plunge him ere long deeper and deeper into the mire, the transition to misappropriation, to embezzlement, to fraudulent trading and betrayal of trust, whether to employers or to relatives and friends, becomes almost inevitable, and he is henceforth a ruined man. The waters close over him, he is engulfed in the stream, and the chances are a thousand to one that he never regains dry land.

Criminals of this description are to be pitied almost as much as they must be blamed. No such consideration can be extended to others encountered only too frequently at the present day in a lower stratum of society. Crimes the most brutal and atrocious are unhappily very prevalent among a certain class: the collier, toiling artisan, and workman, to whom a recent rise in wages may have brought a sudden and unexpected accession of means—for which they can find no employment but in satisfying a lust for drink. The wide-spread drunkenness among such people, embracing as it does ranks and classes above them which might be supposed superior to the low temptation, has grown into a national evil. A constantly increasing percentage of crimes with violence is committed by soddened and brutalised ruffians in their cups. The besotted toper returns to his home, barren and cheerless,

because all supplies have been diverted to gratify his artificial thirst. Angry altercations follow, quarrels, mutual recriminations, between the long-suffering wife, who in her misery has sought solace in the same debasing cup. At last the stronger sex, goaded and maddened to fury, asserts its mastery by cowardly blows, delivered with the first weapon to hand, with knife, hobnailed boots, or bare fist, and the evening journals are furnished with a paragraph, headed "Brutal Wife Murder." Sometimes children are included in the deed. Sometimes the affray follows a pothouse quarrel, and the victim is a drunken associate, possibly an unoffending spectator, who has essayed to act as a peacemaker, and brought upon himself the murderous wrath of both parties to the fight. Wretches who have been thus transformed by drink into wild beasts are not habitual criminals. They belong rather to the class of chance criminals, of those who by weak surrendering to vicious habits have had crime thrust upon them.

But no picture of crime in modern England would be complete which lacked a portrait of those who may be said to have achieved crime. The well educated criminal, as expert as he is daring, as trusted as he is deceitful, well born possibly, and highly esteemed, who pursues, nevertheless, for years a course of systematic fraud on the most colossal scale, is essentially a product of these later times. He is another remarkable instance of that tendency to exaggeration which is one of the notes of our age. The names of these giants in guilt are familiar to all. The Redpaths and Robsons of a few

years back were but the prototypes of men who outdo them in shameless depravity. The recent immense extension of commercial enterprise, the magnitude of modern financial operations, have opened up to these evil geniuses opportunities which their predecessors seldom obtained. They work their flagitious schemes with so much skill that they commonly secure for themselves a long enjoyment of prosperity. When the crash comes every one is taken by surprise. Yet the facts as they become known are found to be nearly always identical. There have been the same circumstances of great wealth displayed, the sources of which are unexplained; the same carelessness in supervision, the same blind trustfulness on the part of directors and employers which has accepted fraudulent figures and audits incompletely carried out.

There is a strong family likeness in the careers of these great commercial criminals, and any one may be taken as the type of all. The scene opens in counting-house or bank, in which as junior clerk or subordinate employé the future prince of rogues displays such undoubted talents for business that he soon gains commendation. Advancement follows; but the latter is probably too slow for his ardent and avaricious spirit, and his fertile wits begin to plan out more expeditious methods of obtaining at once by fraud what only long years of patient industry would bring him with honour. It may be that his schemes are assisted by the trust his employers place in him, or by their neglect of simple precautions; it may be that

he is surrounded by innumerable checks, and that his successful progress is hampered and hindered ; but if he be of the true type he will triumph over all such difficulties. He has genius enough to carve out a line for himself. Perhaps he depends upon systematic falsification of figures, perhaps he forges freely, perhaps he manufactures and circulates spurious securities ; but in one way or another he rises rapidly in wealth and esteem. So soon as his hollow bark is launched upon the great waters of credit his operations increase, he becomes widely known, and he draws more fish into his net. Now, too, he begins to enjoy life. He revels upon the fat of the land. He has town house and country house, a yacht, a shooting-box, a moor. His stables are filled with carriages and costly hunters. He aspires to be styled a modern Mæcenas, is a liberal patron of the fine arts, is esteemed highly by dealers and Academicians. Not unfrequently he adopts the cloak of piety as the best antidote to suspicion. He subscribes liberally to all charities, is himself churchwarden or elder, is often seen on the platform at Exeter Hall, and is quoted as a shining light among Revivalists and Latter Day Saints. Surprise that so excellent a man should have gone astray is one of the first of the shocks which accompany the sudden discovery of his guilt. Regret and compassion for him are probably expressed at first, till fuller revelations prove how wide-reaching have been his guilty practices, and how his collapse brings numbers of innocent persons to beggary and ruin. Then we

have an outburst of indignation against all who permitted him to escape detection, and for so long.

What measure of success has attended our police organisation since its establishment may not be very accurately determined. Many people deny that it has accomplished much; some protest against the modern tendency to rely altogether upon the police as entailing the loss of personal independence and self-reliance. This spirit is often exaggerated into unfriendliness against the force. Every unfavourable circumstance is quoted to its discredit. Its members are sometimes charged with exceeding their powers, sometimes with condoning offences when it has been made worth their while to be conveniently blind. More commonly the police are twitted with their failures in following out clues and bringing to justice the perpetrators of heinous and other crimes. Quite recently the unfortunate revelation that certain hitherto trusted London detectives had made common cause with the enemies of society threw grave suspicions upon the rectitude of the whole constabulary. Nevertheless, it would be grossly unfair to ignore what the police have done and still do. They have undoubtedly contributed to repress and subjugate crime. Their existence is a bulwark against it; a standing menace to evil-doers; a plain warning that the law is and intends to continue supreme. The fact that serious crimes now and again pass undetected may prove that police machinery is imperfect, but not that it has failed. Against the crimes which baffle all efforts at detection may be set



those which through police intervention, active or passive, are never committed at all. The constable on his beat is like the sentinel watching over the welfare and safety of the sleeping town. He is always on the alert, and gives instant alarm on the approach of danger.

At the same time it cannot be denied that our detective police achieves smaller successes than that of our Continental neighbours. This is mainly to be traced to the repugnance of a free country to anything approaching espionage, a sentiment which insists that something more than mere suspicion shall exist to warrant any infringement of the liberty of the subject. These limitations naturally circumscribe the action of the police, paralysing their efforts, and rendering them often barren of results. Yet the system as now constituted cannot well be found fault with. In all the large towns an elaborate machinery exists which works with clock-like precision. Take the case of London, in which the arrangements have most recently been thoroughly revised under the close personal supervision of the newly constituted chief of the Department of Criminal Investigation, as it is now styled.

This official is seated at Scotland Yard, the well-known centre of the detective system; and here are gathered together the threads of a vast network which embraces the whole metropolis in its ramifications. Early every morning reports are received at this head-quarters from all out-stations of the crimes committed during the night. It is the

business of a responsible official to examine these without loss of time. Should there be among the lists any crime of unusual magnitude and importance, full information thereof is telegraphed forthwith to our Prefect. If he is still in bed, the electric bell is at his side, and he can himself read off from the instrument the news as it comes, and reply with necessary instructions. All the reports are at once set up in type upon the premises. Within an hour they are struck off and circulated by the police messengers in light tax-carts throughout the police stations of the metropolis. These "informations," as they are called, contain full particulars of the crimes, with a full *signalement* of their perpetrators, and the whole document is read aloud to the reliefs of blue-coated constables as they go on duty. The same process is repeated four times a day; fresh reports are made the groundwork of fresh informations, and thus every policeman over a wide area of thirty square miles is made aware of what mischief is afoot. When the case is more serious, immediately on the receipt of the morning reports telegraphic communications are sent simultaneously to all the chief detective officers at out-stations, who in turn warn their immediate subordinates to be on the alert. In such a case, too, the chief will have promptly supervened either personally or by wire. Acting under his orders the experts—detective officers have each their specialty—have been summoned to Scotland Yard to confer. The chief of the department meets them, listens to their advice, discusses the

case in all its bearings, and decides upon the course of action. Perhaps the job is entrusted specially to some particular man, perhaps to several. It may be that the whole machinery is set in movement and a general hue and cry is raised throughout and even beyond the metropolitan boundaries, by prompt inter-communication with the police of the seaports and principal provincial towns. As the day passes scraps of news probably come in, and are at once distributed to the sleuth-hounds who are drawing the vast covert. The scent grows stronger in consequence on this side or on that; one hound has struck it, and his whimper—transmitted by wire—is taken up by the pack; ere long, if all goes well, the leading pursuers break from scent to view, and before night the quarry has been run into and secured.

When a great crime has been committed in the country the same course is followed. We will suppose a bishop's palace has been broken into, a quantity of plate and valuables extracted. The county constabulary communicate at once by telegraph with the metropolitan police: the stolen property is described, the person of the thief, who was observed leaving the house. Perhaps he tumbled down stairs, or fell out of the window, and is supposed to have injured himself. "Look out for a small man, or a tall man," as the case may be, "with a broken arm or a broken leg." This is the *consigne* sent from Scotland Yard: "Look out at the pawn shops and the known receivers for the stolen valuables." "Short account herewith," flashes next. An hour or two after-

wards the printed informations are circulated in the manner already described. All the hospitals and infirmaries have been visited, and inquiries made of newly-received cases with fractured or injured limbs. The London chief investigator has had a long colloquy, by wire, with the local chief constable. "Can you give me more details? How was the deed done? What instruments used? How was entrance obtained, and so forth?" The replies to these queries are so many clues to the experienced metropolitan detective. One or other of the old officers called in to confer says directly, "That is Blustering Bob's style of work," or, "I could swear to Jemmy the Tinman's *modus operandi*," or, "The Black-faced Poacher had a hand in that, I'll go bail." Within an hour the detective who has this valuable special knowledge is on the track of his old friend. Blustering Bob or Jemmy the Tinman is "wanted." It is on the informations, it is wired right and left, their favourite haunts are drawn, and before the day is out the culprit is discovered, with the bishop's signet ring in his waistcoat pocket and his arm in a sling.

Of course these pursuits are not always and immediately successful. But it is at least certain that the system has been greatly improved since the notorious trials when Kurr and Benson turned Queen's evidence, and the public attention was aroused to the inefficiency of the detective police. Until the new organisation was introduced the detective department at Scotland Yard was closed from midnight to ten a.m. The argus eyes of the law were asleep, the whole machinery was

stopped, and until eleven in the morning did not recommence work. The criminal, therefore, who did his business in the night watches was certain always of a few hours' start, knowing full well that no pursuit would be set on foot except during the regular hours. It is far otherwise now. A superior officer remains on duty at the central office all night. He has full discretionary powers; he is a linguist, and can communicate, if necessary, with all the capitals of Europe; he is authorised to rouse the chief at any moment of the night; he is expected to send out myrmidons promptly in pursuit, to direct the out-stations to set a special watch upon the great railway termini; to wire also to Liverpool, Dover, Folkestone, Southampton, and other great points of departure for other climes. The various units of the detective force are also kept more rigidly in hand. Every man is obliged to enter in a journal a detailed account of his proceedings from hour to hour. If at the moment engaged on a particular "job," and it is rarely that he is not so, he has to describe his operations, his movements from place to place, the steps by which he conducts his investigation. These journals and diaries are closely scrutinised week after week by the divisional inspectors and superintendent, and every month they are submitted for the examination of the chief himself. Very careful measures are taken to prevent subordinates from falling into temptation. Private persons for whom criminal investigations are made are not now at liberty to give rewards direct. All moneys must be paid to the Chief of the Department,

and it rests with him to distribute it in such portions and to such officers as he considers most deserving. For instance, the reward offered may be high in one case where the victims are wealthy ; in another, where the ends of justice are equally concerned, no reward may be forthcoming. The system now in force provides one general fund, which is administered with due care by the responsible head of the department, and the door is thus closed to much of the dishonesty and chicanery which was possible when the subordinate dealt with the private individual direct.

Having thus briefly indicated the manner in which crime is pursued and hunted down, let us follow the culprit from the time of his arrest through the various stages of discomfort to which he is now subjected by the law, not only as a punishment for his personal misconduct, but as a salutary warning to others. The apprehension has been made by virtue of a warrant on sworn information, and the offender when captured is lodged, if necessary for safe custody, in a police cell, but removed thence with all possible despatch to one or other of Her Majesty's prisons. He is next taken before the magistrate, one or more, in police court or petty sessions, who hear evidence and decide the case. If within their powers, they deal summarily with it ; if more serious and seeming to require more exemplary punishment, the culprit is sent for trial to sessions or assizes. But in almost every instance, unless acquitted, he finds himself for a greater or less period sentenced to incarceration in

one or other of our gaols. If the term ranges from two years downwards to a week or a few days, the sentence is endured in what until 1878 were known as the borough or county prisons scattered up and down the country; if the crime must be dealt with more severely the penalty is penal servitude in a convict prison, the shortest period of which is for five years, and the longest for life. The last-named prisons have been invariably in the hands of the Government, but those first named were till last year controlled by the local magistracy, and their maintenance fell principally upon the local rates. But since the passing of the Prison Act of 1877, which came into force upon the 1st April, 1878, the whole of these prisons have been brought under the direct supervision of the State; they are altogether maintained by the imperial exchequer, and their administration, except where the protection or punishment of the criminal inmates is concerned, is vested exclusively in a body of officials, styled the Prison Commissioners, who with their inspectors and assistants occupy a portion of the Home Office, and act under the immediate orders of the Secretary of State.

Although the measure was not passed without some opposition, it was based upon such sensible principles that even its foes could only find fault with it on sentimental grounds. The arrangements which it was proposed to replace were open to severe criticism. The various prisons were very variously managed. In one county the rules were stringent,

in the next foolishly lax. Here the prisoner spent half his time on the treadmill, there he never climbed a step. He might be dieted quite differently; he might in this prison perform double the amount of work that he did in that. Again, the locality of the prisons was often the result of chance; they did not follow population, but remained where they had been planted years and years before. There were in some districts too many prisons, in others too few. Here the prison authority had to hire cell accommodation at a distance, and endure the expense of removing their prisoners thither; there the prison was habitually half empty. Full or empty, the same staff was maintained: as the influx of prisoners was uncertain officers could not be dispensed with. Consequently, in some of the small prisons the proportion of officers to prisoners was as five to one. Above all, the expense of maintenance was unfairly laid entirely upon land and house property, while incomes derived from other sources did not contribute a sixpence, although benefiting equally from the protection prisons are supposed to afford. Moreover, in these days of rapid locomotion, one district, probably, had to pay for the imprisonment of criminals belonging to another. There was, therefore, every reason to make the cost of prisons a charge upon the imperial rather than the local exchequer.

To remedy these anomalies and establish one uniform system has been the primary object in view, both with the framers of the Bill and those who since it



passed have been entrusted with the enforcement of the Act. A prisoner's life, from first to last, in one of Her Majesty's local prisons is now much the same everywhere. He is bathed and cleansed on reception; the doctor sees him and certifies to the class of labour he is fit to perform; the chaplain makes a note of his antecedents, of his education, and of his religious knowledge. He is then passed into the main prison, inducted into his cell; the rules are explained, the task he must perform pointed out to him. This cell, except for chapel or exercise, whether in the yards or upon the treadwheels, he does not leave for a month, if his sentence extends to that period. During that month he is allowed bed-clothes, but no mattress; his diet is restricted, and his labour—of the kind known as first-class—continues for ten hours. At the termination of a month he is permitted to pass on to second-class labour, he may commence to acquire a trade, he may occasionally leave his cell to work with others like himself, but in strict silence, and only during good behaviour. After the first three months he may see his friends once, and write to them once; his diet becomes fuller and more varied; he may earn a substantial sum in the shape of a few shillings to help him on his release. All this time, however, he is liable to forfeit any privileges he has earned, and to suffer other inflictions for misconduct. He may have a few hours in a dark cell, may be restricted to bread and water fare for two or three days, and for longer periods to short commons, of

which Indian meal and potatoes form the staple food. His health the while is carefully tended. He is continually weighed; if he falls away in flesh, or suffers from bodily ailments, he is prescribed for or admitted into hospital. His moral welfare is equally regarded: he has to attend daily service in the chapel, must attend school, and accept the ministrations of the chaplain in the privacy of his cell. If at the time of his release he is destitute, he is clothed decently, provided with food, and a railway warrant to pass him on to his home, if remote from the locality of the prison. This treatment under the new régime may not differ in general outlines from that pursued under the old; but it is at least, nowadays, uniform in every respect. The prisoner sentenced in Northumberland finds in Morpeth and Newcastle gaols precisely the same punishment as the man in Bodmin or Exeter, in Coalbath Fields, Carnarvon, Maidstone, or Carlisle. The hours of labour are now everywhere the same; the character of the labour also, the diet, the forfeitures for misconduct, the marks to be earned by industry, and the gratuities in cash which follow the marks. Other advantages may be expected to follow from this unified administration. There is the reduction in expenditure gained by closing nearly half the whole number of prisons and concentrating all prisoners in those that remain, there having been for many years cells available in excess of numbers to fill them, but which were wasted and could not be utilised from want of powers to transfer prisoners

from prison to prison. There will also be the increased earnings of prisoners from the more scientific adaptation of their labour, from the facility of concentrating prison tradesmen in special trade prisons, and generally from the development of the industrial instruction of prisoners, which a strong central authority is nearly certain to bring about.

There has been no strongly-marked alteration in the manner of carrying out a sentence of penal servitude in recent years, but the system is, notwithstanding, little known, and there are people who still talk of the hulks and transportation as though these old-fashioned outlets for criminality were now in existence. As a matter of fact, no convict—the name is specially reserved for all sentenced to death or penal servitude—leaves the kingdom, except as in the first case by the intervention of the public executioner. Penal servitude is inflicted at the great convict establishments. The convict, as soon as convenient, is removed from the local prison, where since the assizes he has remained in durance, to Millbank or Pentonville. Here he is subjected to precisely the same process as in the local prisons; but at the end of nine months, according to the doctor's decision, he passes on to a public works prison, to Chatham, Dartmoor, Portsmouth, Portland, or the like. Arrived there, he is turned out with hundreds of associates to labour on fortifications, breakwaters, dockyard extensions, and so forth. How substantial is the work thus performed may be judged by all who have seen these monuments to

convict labour at the various stations above named. Life in a convict prison is certainly not rose-coloured. Labour begins at daylight and is continued, with an interval for dinner, until sundown; the fare is in quality excellent, but in quantity not too full. An absolute submission to authority, the surrender of all personal volition, unhesitating obedience, constant cleanliness and orderliness are not the least irksome of the restraints the criminal has to endure. But with all this there is no unnecessary harshness; the discipline is firm, but never arbitrary; the well-being of the prisoner, and his protection from ill-usage, are carefully provided for by the constant supervision and inspection of superior authorities. Nor is the element of hope entirely absent. The "mark system," as it is called, which has been in force for upwards of fourteen years, puts in the power of every man to gain a certain remission of his sentence by his own industry. How powerfully this incentive acts in encouraging a man to use his whole skill and energy is seen in the high-class work turned out in the convict prisons—in the beautiful stone dressing, the intricate carpenter's and smith's work, in the employment of convicts as bakers, painters, engine-drivers, sawyers, fitters, and the like. A more substantial test, perhaps, is the money value of the work done. According to the last year's blue book the actual earnings of some 8,000 convicts, as shown by exact calculations, after careful measurements, amounted to £250,000.

There is, however, another and a last stage through which the criminal passes—one which is too often only the short breathing-space between the termination of one sentence and the commencement of another—the period when he is once more at large. This has been the subject of his dreams, sleeping and waking. What port is to the homeward-bound sailor, such is the day of release to the prisoner, only intensified a thousandfold in the eagerness of its anticipation. The slow sad hours bring it round at last. His hair and beard are no longer clipped by the prison barber, who cuts both with the same scissors. He has at length bridged over the great gulf which has so long separated him from the rest of the community, and he will soon resume his place in the world to fight upon his own account, to be tempted, no doubt, perchance to succumb only too easily again. The attitude of the world towards him when he is once more free is perhaps a little too absolutely repellant and unrelenting. It is not alone that he has been photographed and his *signalement* widely distributed among the police, that he has had to submit to inspection at the hands of the detective, and that he may expect further continuous surveillance, but he will in most cases find it extremely difficult to earn an honest living, however desirous he may be to do so. His old honest associates—if he has any—will shun him, employers will not care to engage him lest their other workmen should take offence. Most doors are closed to him; he is a suspicious character, not to be trusted even when in sight. What

wonder that he soon again falls away! That he does so less often now than heretofore is very largely due to the philanthropic efforts of the Discharged Prisoners' Aid Societies, notably that of London, which is now under royal patronage, and which does a vast amount of good. This society deals entirely with ex-convicts from the convict establishments; but there are others in the provinces which work with much the same goodwill for the prisoners from the local prisons. In London, shortly before a convict is due for release, his case is submitted to the society and duly considered. If accepted—as it generally is, save in the case of some few notorious criminals, upon whom all good offices would be entirely wasted—when the day of release arrives the emancipated prisoner is conducted privately, in plain clothes, to the society's office, whence he is passed on to some situation, as labourer or handicraftsman, according to his qualification. The employer and the society are usually the only two in the secret; the society answers to the police, and there is no need for the usual supervision; the man carries therefore no stigma, he has had a fair start, and it is mainly his own fault if he again falls away. This beneficent treatment is certainly not the least efficacious among the various measures which have contributed to reduce crime. By-and-by, the reformatories and industrial schools may convert the raw material before it has had time to degenerate into the lowest forms, improved police arrangements may render property more and more

safe, and the commission of crime more dangerous, but these are rather remote ameliorations. Meanwhile the Aid Societies which seek to rehabilitate our fallen brethren, which give them a fresh start and a new opportunity of leading honest and respectable lives, are actually accomplishing beneficent and satisfactory results day after day in our very midst.

## CHAPTER XV.

### TRAVELLING AND HOTELS.

General View of the English Railway System—The Block System—Extent and Expenditure of Railway Lines—Speed and Comfort—Pullman Cars—A Journey due North from London—The Railway Commissioners—Refreshment Rooms—Travelling by Coach—Different Kinds of Coaching—Posting—Bicycling—English Hotels—Absorption of Small Hotels—Typical Frequenters of Hotels—Hotels which are Survivals from the Past—Their Questionable Comfort.

THE entire length of Great Britain may now be traversed for a few pence under three pounds sterling. The price of a single third-class ticket from London to John o' Groat's—from King's Cross to Wick or Thurso Station—is two pounds nineteen shillings and fourpence. The distance is as nearly as possible six hundred and fifty miles. The time spent upon the journey will be something less than twenty-five hours, and the journey itself will be accomplished, whatever class the traveller may choose, with comparatively slight fatigue. On the whole, the management of the English railways is excellent. The speed is great, there is little overcrowding; the companies' servants are, though frequently overworked, for the most part civil; and if, in spite of the announcement forbidding gratuities, "tips" are expected, railway



porters are abundantly satisfied with vails of the most modest amount. Much of the discomfort which the English railway traveller experiences is inflicted on him by disagreeable travelling companions. Yet for one who comes under this category, how many are there, whatever class the traveller may choose, who are not merely unobjectionable but welcome associates? Let it be assumed that, in common with many excellent and respectable personages of a frugal turn—officers of both services, substantial agriculturists, and minor dignitaries of the Church—the passenger selects third class; he will be singularly unfortunate if he finds himself in society to which he can reasonably take exception. No doubt there is plenty of rowdyism in the train, but then rowdyism is of its essence gregarious. It has an ineradicable tendency to gravitate to a special part or parts of that street in motion which a train may be considered as being. There is a kind of Alsatia in every steam locomotive bound on a long journey, and there is much to be thankful for in the fact that its area is rigidly localised. The father of a family need be under no apprehension that he must choose between first or second class on the one hand, and on the other hand the risk, or rather the strong probability of a personal encounter with much that is offensive and disreputable. Railway guards are quick judges of character—many of them, too, with quite as much a character of their own, as keen a sense of humour and wit, as the guards of the old stage coach—and they may be trusted to save decent folk, who travel

third class on long journeys, exposure to any serious annoyance. It may be added that British exclusiveness, which shows itself pretty plainly in the first-class carriage, has a tendency to disappear in the second and third.

The railway system \* of England and Wales consists of just 12,000 miles of line, of which two-thirds are in the hands of the six large companies—the Great Western, 2,059; London and North Western, 1,632; North Eastern, 1,429, Midland, 1,238; Great Eastern, 859; Great Northern, 640. Amalgamation very early became the order of the day, and is steadily on the increase, although it is not possible without an Act of Parliament. The centre of the system is London, and every company which can possibly make its way to the capital does not fail to do so. At first railways were worked without fixed signals, nor was it till 1838 that any regular code of signals was adopted. Now the semaphore, fitted with these, one for the up, and one for the down line, is in use at all stations and junctions. When the arm is raised to the full extent the line is stopped; when it is at an angle of forty-five degrees the need of caution is indicated to the driver; when it is at rest the driver knows that he can proceed at full speed. At night “line clear” is expressed by a white light, “caution” by green, “danger” by red. The block system provides that

\* For most of the facts contained in this brief account of the English railways I am indebted to Mr. Joseph Parsloe's instructive little work “On Our Railway System.” (Kegan Paul. 1878.)

no two trains shall be between any two block signal-boxes—these boxes being distant from each other from two or three to six or eight miles—at the same time on the same line. It is to be seen in its highest perfection on the Midland, and it may best be described in Mr. Parsloe's own words:—A, B, and C, are supposed to represent three block posts, and the process of signalling is thus carried on. On the approach of a train to A, the signalman will call the attention of B, and then give the "Be Ready" signal on the bell and the proper "Train Approaching" dial signal. The signalman at B, after having ascertained that the line is clear for the train to run upon, must repeat the signals, and when he has received the necessary intimation from it that he has repeated them correctly, he must ply the needle to "Line Clear." As soon as the train has passed A, the signalman there must give the bell signal "Train on Line" to B, and the signalman at B must acknowledge the signal and employ the needle. The signalman at A must then give to B the proper "Train on Line" dial signal; and when the signalman at B has acknowledged that signal and received the necessary intimation from A that his acknowledgment is correct he must ply the needle on to "Line Blocked," and then call the attention of and give the "Be Ready" and "Train Approaching" signals to C. When the train has passed B, the signalman there must call the attention of A, and give the proper signal indicating that the line is clear of the train, which must be duly acknowledged

by the signalman at A, and so on throughout the block.

The total working expenditure of the railways of the United Kingdom amounted in 1876 to £33,535,509, the total receipts from all sources to £62,215,757. The working expenses therefore come to about half the receipts, but it has been frequently asserted that mineral traffic is carried at a far greater expense than passenger traffic. The number of miles travelled by all the trains was 215,711,739. Exclusive of holders of season tickets, there were 44,859,066 first class, 66,478,195 second class, 426,950,034 third class. The authorised capital amounted to £741,802,527. The rolling-stock consisted of 12,994 locomotives, 27,191 carriages for passengers, 10,485 carriage trucks and horse boxes, 356,121 wagons for merchandise and live stock. Employment was given by them for between three and four hundred thousand officials and employés. The total of trains every day was 1,010. In the process of signalling during the twenty-four hours, 160,000 operations were performed by about 13,000 hands. Coming to accidents and casualties, during the year 1876, 1,245 persons were killed, 4,724 injured, the great majority in each case being railway servants. The total of passengers killed was 1 in 3,872,570, and of passengers injured 1 in 385,867. The proportion of railway servants killed was 1 in 416, and of injured 1 in 86.

As regards speed, if not of comfort, in locomotion we have reached a point beyond which we are not

likely to go. From Bristol to Aberdeen, a distance of 800 miles, which in the old coach times would have occupied ten days, is performed in eighteen hours; from London to Holyhead, 260 miles, in six hours and forty minutes; from London to Plymouth, 247 miles, in six hours and a quarter. The average rate of speed at which the quickest express on each of the great lines travels is  $47\frac{3}{4}$  miles an hour. On two lines this pace is exceeded. On the Great Northern, the train leaving London at 10, and arriving at Peterborough at 11.30, a distance of  $76\frac{1}{4}$  miles, goes at the rate of 51 miles an hour. On the Great Western the Flying Dutchman leaves Paddington at 11.45, reaches Swindon, a distance of  $77\frac{1}{4}$  miles, without a single stoppage, at twelve minutes after one o'clock, the uniform pace being thus  $53\frac{1}{4}$  miles. The journey on this line is, indeed, as far as Bath, the quickest in the world. The distance is  $106\frac{1}{4}$  miles, and is performed in two hours and thirteen minutes, including ten minutes stoppage at Swindon—the actual time, therefore, spent in travelling is two hours and three minutes, and the pace is therefore something over fifty-two miles an hour. As regards comfort and ease, the quality of many of the first and second class carriages on the Great Western leaves nothing to be wished. The Pullman's cars were introduced into England just five years ago, in February, 1874, but the experiment has not proved quite as successful as might have been expected, and as it deserves. These cars were first used on the Midland line, and contain both drawing-rooms and sleeping-

rooms. In the former there are eighteen chairs, which can be turned on their axle in such a way as to face either the window or the centre of the apartment; in the latter there are sixteen beds in the main compartments, and six in two private compartments. These rooms on rails are decorated in a very finished and artistic manner, and at the touch of a spring by the side a table flies out, on which the passengers can have a meal spread. Whether the traveller prefers the sociability of the Pullman cars or the comparative privacy of ordinary English carriages, he cannot fail to recognise the superior smoothness of motion obtained on Mr. Pullman's springs.

An expedition, from the extreme south to the extreme north of the United Kingdom, such as that mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, will give the traveller a comprehensive idea of our railway management in its practical working, and will acquaint him with the many varying rates of railway speed. When he has passed the fringe of the metropolitan suburbs—that vast reticulation of houses and streets, and townships, which is overspreading the home counties—he will fly forth with the swiftness of an arrow shot from the bow. Onward he will be borne at the same tremendous pace. Only one stoppage between London and York—at Grantham—where engines are replenished, and passengers, if they wish it, refreshed; after York straight through to Newcastle without another check. When the train is on Scotch soil it proceeds circumspectly. By the time that it has

advanced into the heart of the wilds and fastnesses of Caledonia, its advance is not so much circumspect as dilatory. In a little time it commences a series of stoppages, quite irrespective of the existence of stations, till at last the guard puts on the break, and the train is at a standstill, for no other reason apparently than that he wants the engine-driver to accommodate him with a pipe-light. These are the inevitable incidents of railway travelling in the far north of Great Britain, and if one does not happen to be in a feverish hurry they give picturesqueness and variety to the trip. Take them altogether, and we have marvellously little with which to find fault in the conduct of our railway companies. There is no other country in the world in which the three great conditions of railway travelling have been so perfectly secured—multiplication of lines, concentration of communications, and rapidity of movement. In point of punctuality much remains to be desired, especially on the southern lines. Let there be the slightest increase of traffic, and an English train is pretty sure to be late. This is probably owing to the practice of setting the time bills with too little allowance for inevitable accidents, and to the necessity of keeping a sharp look-out for goods trains. The latter inconvenience is being gradually removed on the more crowded parts of many railways by the expensive process of laying down an extra line of rails.

These advantages have not been secured to the public entirely by the free action of the railway

companies. Entrusted with vast responsibilities and possessing monopolies which are practically undisputed, the railway companies of England have naturally become the subjects of special legislation. An entire code of railway law, full of anomalies and absurdities, has been created in the course of the last forty years, and in 1878 there were upwards of 4,000 special Acts of Parliament relating to railways, in which Acts, and in extracts from them posted up at every station, can be found the amounts of fare which each company is authorised to charge.\* Of these the first is more than a century old, bearing date 1758, and authorising a railroad—not worked by steam, of course—for the carriage of coals to Leeds, while the first passenger railway—the Stockton and Darlington—was authorised by an Act passed only so recently as 1825. Not one of the entire number has reference to any single railway company in its integrity, and after a few miles of line have been traversed, we suddenly find ourselves under a changed jurisdiction. In 1844 a parliamentary committee was appointed under the presidency of Mr. Gladstone to consider the legal status of the railway companies. As one of the consequences of their report, an Act was passed, sanctioning the purchase of railways by the State, at any time after the expiration of 21 years,† and providing that every railway company should convey

\* The state of the law on this and kindred subjects is fully given in Hodges' "Law of Railways," sixth edition, by J. M. Lely. (H Sweet. 1876.)

† A Royal Commission appointed in 1865 reported against the policy of Government purchase. The scheme embodied in the Act of 1844 is impracticable.



passengers by at least one train each way daily, at a charge not exceeding a penny a mile. Ten years later, the Act of Mr. (now Lord) Cardwell was passed, of which the distinguishing features were to subject rival railway companies to the legal obligation of joint action within certain limits for the public convenience, and to define the liability of the companies for damage or loss of goods during transit. Fourteen years later, it was enacted that the price of fares should be prominently displayed at railway stations; that in every passenger train, consisting of more than one carriage of each class, there should be a smoking compartment; and that the companies should furnish, when applied to, particulars of their charge for goods, enabling the public to distinguish the relative cost of conveyance and loading.

But the most important piece of railway legislation has been the Act of 1873, which created a special court with exceptional powers for the exclusive purpose of taking cognisance of a certain class of railway cases, not those in which pecuniary compensation is asked from a company, but those in which it is demanded that a company shall do some specific act for the benefit of the petitioner, or abstain from giving an unfair advantage to some one else. The ordinary law courts of the country had proved unsuitable for compelling railways to prefer on proper occasion the public advantage to their own, and it was the conviction of this unsuitability that found expression in the report of 1872 which recommended the appointment of the Railway Commissioners. This court, one of whose

members must be a person of experience in railway management—represented at the first appointment by Mr. Price, formerly chairman of the Midland Railway—and another of whose members must be experienced in law—which was represented in the first instance by the late Mr. Macnamara, an eminent lawyer—is primarily entrusted with the powers given by Lord Cardwell's Act to a court of law ; but it has many secondary powers tending in the same direction, its cardinal object being to control, and, so far as they involve public inconvenience, to counteract, the effects of the monopoly acquired by railway companies. The commission is, in fact, a technical tribunal for the redress of popular grievances, the jurisdiction of which extends to Ireland and Scotland ; and in view of the great expense attendant upon railway litigation, it has been expressly provided that municipal and other corporations may institute proceedings before it. The commissioners themselves, however, have no power of initiative, and in one important point—the enforcement of through rates—it is only a railway or canal company which can set the commissioners in motion.

The powers of the commissioners are as extensive as they are unique. They have rights of interference wider than those vested in other bodies, when the lives and well-being of the public are threatened. They have the power of arbitrating both between different companies and between the companies and the public. The right of this or that town to necessary accommodation, better waiting-rooms, platforms,

and covered spaces; the complaints of one trader as to preferential rates or superior facilities accorded to another; the demand of one company for running powers over the lines of another—these are the kinds of cases in which the intervention of the commission is invoked. Thus, we learn from the last report of the commission in the year 1877-8, fourteen distinct judgments of the commissioners were pronounced. Three of these cases were local complaints of the insufficient convenience afforded by the railways. In six cases the commission had to consider the application of manufacturing firms, who had a grievance against railway companies. In five the issue was a dispute between railways themselves. Here we have three distinct classes of questions which it is infinitely better should be decided without coming into the law courts. When once a question of law arises, the commissioners are bound to state a case for a court of law, although they are themselves entrusted with the delicate duty of determining whether a particular question be one of law or not. Nor could there be a better proof of the soundness of the opinions given by the commissioners than the fact, that in almost every case in which the appeal has been made, the courts have confirmed the award of the commission.

But the real question is, not so much whether the jurisdiction of the railway commissioners shall be extended, as whether their entire control shall or shall not be handed over to the State. "Our railways," writes Mr. Parsloe, "are in the hands of a number of

separate bodies with conflicting interests, each striving to pay the best dividend to the shareholders as purely commercial concerns. Many of the companies professedly compete with each other, and the result is most of the disadvantages with very few of the advantages of competition.”\* For instance, one of the Midland Company’s express trains from the north is due to arrive at Gloucester at 6.48 p.m.; the Great Western train for the Swindon district leaves at 6.45 p.m., and there is no other train till 12 20 a.m. If therefore, as is almost inevitable, the train is missed, there is an interval of nearly six hours waiting. As matters are, there can be no doubt that the public, subject to the beneficent action of the commissioners, and the enlightened common sense of the railway directors, are at the mercy of the railway companies. It is also indisputable, that the extent to which railway competition is carried, giving us, instead of one uniform organisation, a complex and chaotic system, involves the profitless expenditure of much energy and money. If we are to have a perfectly harmonious and a truly economical railway system, it must be one dominated by the principle of central control. Granted, that the companies agree to a method of amalgamation and unity amongst themselves, all that would have been done would be to substitute a single colossal monopoly for several monopolies, of which the great object would still be not to promote the public convenience, but to put money in the pockets of the shareholders. If it

\* “Our Railway System,” p. 261.

is admitted that the transitionary state in which our railway system now is must ultimately issue in the establishment of a complete scheme of amalgamation, it is certain that this can only be by the institution of State control. The success of a governmental administration of the Post Office and the Telegraph is of course cited as a precedent for the great change now proposed. If the State management of the railways were to answer equally well, there is no doubt that we should have an immense increase of efficiency and economy. In 1865 Mr. Stewart, for twenty years Secretary to the London and North Western Company, stated in his evidence before the Royal Commission, that were the whole traffic of the country worked in unison, a saving of 20 per cent. in expenses would at once be effected. Again, under Government control the majority of legal and parliamentary costs, which in 1875 amounted to considerably over a quarter of a million, would be saved. Thirdly, the number of stations might be reduced, towns in which there are at present two stations close to each other having one. In country villages, the offices of railway, post, and telegraph might be concentrated, the functions of each being discharged by the same person; and finally, it would be possible greatly to lower the fees paid to railway directors.

Pending the accomplishment of changes so radical as these in our railway system, there are minor reforms which it may be practicable to institute with comparatively little trouble. It is much to be wished that the

Railway Commissioners could turn their attention more particularly than they have hitherto done to our refreshment-room system. Nothing can be better than the luncheon baskets with which one is occasionally provided on a small payment on the Midland and some of the south of England lines. There are excellent dining or luncheon rooms at Derby, Crewe, Leicester, York, and other great railway centres, and a capital meal may be obtained at either, it being always understood that one reaches these spots at the proper hours when passengers are expected and the meals are ready to be served. The unfortunate traveller who is behind time or who comes by a slow train often finds himself left out in the cold. If he has left London without having dined at 5.15 p.m., and reaches York between ten and eleven—where he is told that twenty minutes are allowed for gratifying the inner man—his case is hard indeed. He enters the palatial saloon ravenous. But there are no waiters within call. Those who presently make their appearance walk about with the dazed air of men roused out of a heavy sleep, mechanically inquire what the famished pilgrim will take, and automatically fall to work to hew the well-worn joints and the bony chicken that are upon the table. The passenger, if he be wise, will eschew these ready-made suppers, and will content himself with a sandwich and a couple of hard-boiled eggs at the refreshment bar, in a corner of the room, if only he is able to gain his way thither through the group of young men, inhabitants of the town, who make it their favourite

lounge. And there is a lamentable want of variety in the refreshment bill of fare ; very scant is the ingenuity of the refreshment-room cook. Here and there soup may be had—scalding hot water which removes the skin from the palate, and destroys all power of taste for hours—but with this exception there is little relief from the weary round of ham and beef sandwiches, pork pies, sausage rolls, stale buns, and fossil cakes. None of those appetising dainties which greet one at Amiens, Dijon, or Macon, the fresh roll neatly bisected and filled with a cold cutlet or a slice of galantine. No fruit but sour oranges, no drink but deleterious spirits, or British beer. The stony-eyed damsels make it a favour to wait upon you, the charges are exorbitant, the food must generally be bolted standing, amid the cry, “Take your seats for the North,” and loud ringing of bells. No wary traveller will nowadays risk present discomfort and future indigestion by trusting to railway bars for refreshment. He will rather take with him all that he requires from home.

But there are other modes of travelling in England than by steam. It is noticeable that the hansom cab flourishes in England only, and thus it was with some degree of special propriety that Lord Beaconsfield once spoke of it as the “gondola of London.” In New York, the streets of which are perfectly flat, hansom cabs are not used, and tramway cars take the place of all kinds of cabs. Possibly the same thing may some day be witnessed in London, and though the City of London uncompromisingly opposes all legislation of this kind,

the number of bills for procuring tramways introduced to Parliament increases each session. Meanwhile, although a perfect roadway has still to be found—asphalte being too slippery for safety—our vehicles on wheels travel almost as smoothly, when the springs are in good order, over the surface of the London streets of to-day, as if they were upon rails; and both in London and the great provincial capitals, the omnibuses and cabs are as satisfactory as is consistent with the low fares charged. The coach—not, indeed, the mail coach—still exists as an institution. The north of England, Scotland, Wales, and the west of England, are the parts in which coaching mostly survives. Ten years ago the distance between Thurso and Golspie—about a hundred miles—was only to be done by coach. There was then a famous Jehu in those regions, by name Tom Brown, whose Northumbrian “burr” must still dwell in the ears of many a Scotch tourist. He managed his team in true artistic fashion, and he was never without an excellent team to manage. The roads, though often steep, and even precipitous in the neighbourhood of Helmsdale, were generally kept in first-rate condition. Relays of differently built, bred, and trained steeds awaited the traveller, according to the natural characteristics and difficulties of the coming stage. The last, which lay for several miles along a perfect and almost level road—equal to any one of the Queen’s highways in the south of England—was accomplished by four horses, nearly thoroughbred, which would not have discredited a Hyde Park drag in



the season. The appointments of the coach, as of the steeds which drew it, were faultless. The harness was bright, polished, and complete down to the minutest particular. The guard was no ragged tatterdemalion perched up behind, who blew a horn with the feeble squeaky effects produced by one who is a stranger to that instrument, but an official who had scientifically studied its music. There was no such "turn out" from the stables of a coaching company or a commercial proprietor within the four seas.

But the period of railway extension came. It was no longer necessary to go by the high road across the Ord of Caithness, with the cutting breezes of the German Ocean blowing full in your face. For the most part the vehicles which are now called coaches are coaches in very reduced circumstances; or it would be more correct to say that they are not really coaches at all, but have rather the appearance of cast-off chariots, which in better days may have figured in the triumphal procession of travelling circus companies. In many portions of Wales, coaching of a kind still goes on. But when once the coach is considered only as a convertible term for a tourist's van; when it ceases to be essential to the regular traffic of the district; when, above all things, it has lost the official dignity of carrying Her Majesty's mails, you know what to expect. The inside is not too clean and not too sweet. The passengers clamber up to the roof anyhow. There is no longer any prestige attaching to the occupancy of the box-seat. The charioteer is a

casual post-boy, and not a coachman ; the team is made up of odd horses, and neither driver nor traveller take any pride in the business. It will be generally found that the coaches, which, a glance at Bradshaw is sufficient to show, are announced to run short or moderately lengthy distances in various regions of England, belong to railway companies that have not yet succeeded in carrying their lines to the extreme point which tourists desire to reach. There are some obstacles which even modern engineering science fails to overcome ; hence the survival of the coach as a confession of the limitations imposed by nature on human enterprise. From Bideford in Devon to Bude in Cornwall is a fair run for a well-appointed coach—a coach which is on the whole as favourable a specimen of its kind as any to be found in England—and it is but a very short time since other coaches fully equal to it were common enough in North Devon and West Somerset. They have either disappeared entirely or, obeying that law of deterioration which seems the destiny of the public vehicle, they exist merely as tourists' vans during the excursionist season, to begin where the steam locomotive ends. They would not, indeed, give quite so severe a shock to those who will never lose their devotion to the ideal of the Regulator and the Quicksilver Mail as the conveyances which pass for coaches in the Isle of Wight. These may do their best to struggle against the lot which is relegating them to the category of the omnibus and the carrier's cart, but their appearance

bewrayeth them, and they are melancholy confessions that the coach has no longer an independent existence of its own; that it, or something which affects its name, and makes a vain show of perpetuating its traditions, is useful as enabling the traveller to perform the fag end of a journey, but that it is an adjunct, and not an essential feature in the traveller's programme. Perhaps it is needless to say that if it is desired to see a coach which is a faithful, and not an unflattering reproduction of the artistic stage coach of the old régime, it is necessary to go no farther than to the White Horse Cellars in Piccadilly. Nor can a short summer holiday be spent more pleasantly than by securing an outside seat on one of these, under the skilled pilotage of Sir Henry de Bathe, Captain Candy, or some other amateur whip, enjoying the drive to Dorking, St. Albans, Leatherhead, Sevenoaks, or Windsor. Pleasant companions—a team of spanking horses, changed every ten miles—England in full bloom of leaf and flower—will combine to make many a modern spirit regret the methods of locomotion of the past.

The gaps in our railway system cause a very comfortable posting business to be done in different parts of England, and there are certain towns and villages where the excellence of the horses procurable may still fairly surprise the traveller. In the neighbourhood of all great houses one may be sure of a capital one-horse chaise or carriage and pair within call of the railway station. The proprietor of these vehicles makes a very good thing of it during the visiting season. The

most liberal of English hosts is apt to entertain a decided objection to sending his horses out of his stable to fetch his guests; it would indeed be impossible for him to do so, for if he entertains on any considerable scale his visitors are incessantly coming and going. In a country town which has in its neighbourhood the residence of a great county magnate and other gentlemen of position, there is always abundance of posting work out of the London season; and posting masters frequently make a point of keeping an enlarged stable during this period of the year. The same remark is applicable to the hotels in the hearts of districts much affected by tourists. Side by side with the coaching revival we have seen the institution of the driving tour popularised to a high degree. But the driving tour is not for every one, and there are crowds of travellers during this season of the year who make it a point of enjoying as much as they can of the pleasures of the road in the roomy barouches and other open vehicles, which are on hire at the hotels or the livery stables of the pleasure resorts which they chiefly affect. It is not, indeed, an inexpensive mode of enjoyment, but then the holiday outing is only an annual event. Altogether it is possible to get more comfort and pleasure on wheels in England than in any country in the world, and the manner in which we still combine the locomotion which is as old as civilisation with that which dates back from the discovery of steam ensures us a certain variety and picturesqueness which the holiday traveller will be loth to surrender.

The bicycle fills a place too important to be omitted from any survey of the various modes of travelling in England. In some country districts, it is the locomotive on which the postman performs his long and weary round, and on which the Inland Revenue official makes his circle of inspection. Holiday tours in all parts of the United Kingdom are taken on it by the young men of our complex and prosperous middle class; and so popular have these bicycle trips become, that many a wayside inn which was doing a brisk business in the old coaching days, and which the railways had deprived of its customers, has commenced to revive under the influence of the new movement on wheels. There are bicycling clubs in every part of England, which have their periodic meetings. A favourite rendezvous in the neighbourhood of London is Bushey Park, and there, when the weather is fine, as many as a thousand bicyclists congregate. During the summer, too, in the heart of the city, when the business traffic of the day is done, and the streets are clear, an active scene may often be witnessed by gaslight. Under the shadow of the Bank and the Exchange, the asphalte thoroughfare is covered with a host of bicycle riders, performing a series of intricate evolutions on their iron steeds.

For some years past the simple English inn has been gradually disappearing. Much of the change is due to the influence of railways. The typical English hotel of the period is a huge caravanserai, like that at Charing Cross or the St. Pancras Railway Station, situated nearly always close to, or forming part and

parcel of, the terminus itself. The small hotels, which are the survivals of an earlier period, scarcely contrive to eke out a precarious existence. The chief characteristics of the new hotels are the ubiquitous German waiters and the sameness of the food. With two highly commendable qualities they may be credited. In the first place, they are uniformly well ventilated and cleanly; in the second place, no fault can be found with bed-rooms, beds, and bed-linen, and it is always possible to obtain a sponge bath for the asking. Although in England there is nothing like the organised hotel life of New York, there are certain distinct types of English hotel habitués; thus in London there are certain establishments which are patronised for the most part by regular customers, amongst whom, it may be remarked, a personal acquaintance and a certain sort of social freemasonry exist. The military element is common to most of these, particularly in the principal garrison towns. The house which is the head-quarters of the London coaching movement has among its regular visitors every sort of gentleman who takes an interest in the road and its resuscitated glories. Another institution belonging to the same class—that of the hotel which is a connecting-link between the extinct tavern and the latter day club—is a great place of resort for fashionable Americans and for opulent foreigners. There is, too, the hotel which is the home of diplomatists, just as there are hotels which are specially frequented by members of municipal

bodies, who have come up to London on business connected with their towns. Country solicitors, especially from the north, put up at the older hostelrys in Covent Garden. In the provinces, artists and sportsmen affect the smaller hotels, while the bigger find a regular succession of customers in young men of means, who, before they settle down to domestic life, wish to see a little of the world, and like to see it in hotels; in middle-aged bachelors, who beguile their celibacy by travel and shrink from the cares of housekeeping; in husbands and wives who are without children, or having children, have seen them fairly started in life; and above all, in widows who have money, and who are fond of the excitement of travel. The commercial traveller is of course to be found in all classes of hotels, according to his pretensions, but mostly in hotels where he reigns supreme.

Hotel life is not yet fully naturalised among us. We have bid adieu to the old régime, but have not become thoroughly accustomed to the new. Only a small percentage of Englishmen and Englishwomen really enjoy the tumultuous existence which is passed amid the hubbub of departures, arrivals, and tables d'hôte. The table d'hôte system is carried to an extent that scarcely suits the English nature. It is well enough to take our dinners at a common table, at which, after an awkward interval of blank silence or jerky utterance, we begin to feel that our next-door neighbour is of a humanity like unto our own, and that we have not committed any unpardonable breach of the

proprieties in opening a conversation. There are yet plausible reasons for maintaining the old-fashioned and much-abused British reserve. Most of us feel that opening up conversational acquaintance with strangers is a terrible risk. There is no fear, of course, of insult, or that our pockets will be picked, but there is the possibility of being bored. The stranger may be diametrically our opposite; conservative, while we are liberal; garrulous, while we hate to listen; above all, he may be indiscreet, and may tempt us into the expression of opinions which we do not care to wear upon our sleeve. Our privacy is thus intruded upon, we find ourselves talking to the table, and in the midst of a dead silence confessing that we don't like *haricots blancs*, or recording our enthusiasm for small beer. These are the dread reasons which seal the lips of so many in a strange company, especially at a strange table d'hôte. And if this be true at dinner-time, it is a thousandfold more so at 9 a.m. We Englishmen are not gregariously disposed at breakfast-time. The attempt to accommodate the British breakfast to the manner of the French *dejeûner* is an experiment of doubtful wisdom. The Englishman who hears that the first meal of the day is served only between half-past eight and eleven o'clock is conscious of an interference with his liberties, which he resents. Nor, at this early hour, is he the most companionable of creatures. He has not got rid of a sort of moral goose-skin. He is often not much more than half awake. He is far from disposed to enter into



conversation with casual acquaintances. He is, to speak the plain truth, a trifle sulky, and a great deal pre-occupied. He may have a fine appetite for ham and eggs, broiled soles and rashers, but he has a wish to avoid the scrutiny of his fellows while he gratifies it. He has the contents of his letters to digest, or he has the campaign of the day which lies before him to meditate.

But if, as regards the table d'hôte arrangement, we experience some of the difficulties and inconveniences incidental to a period of transition, the student of human nature is indebted to it for a thousand diverting and edifying opportunities. He enters the hotel drawing-room, and he discovers a miscellaneous company, of which each member is conspicuously failing in the attempt to seem thoroughly at ease. There is a recently married couple affecting to take an interest in the newspapers of the day, betraying the while a consciousness of the insincerity in a little giggle. There is the family group—father, mother, two daughters and a son—exchanging commonplace remarks in a whisper. There are two maiden ladies who ask each other whether to-morrow will be fine in an awed undertone. There is the senior resident of the establishment, who has taken up a position on the hearth-rug, and who speaks in a voice ostentatiously loud, but decidedly uneasy, nevertheless, for the purpose of proclaiming that he is quite at home. Finally, there are numerous other gentlemen and ladies who are doing nothing in particular, but trying how to

look indifferent to all that is going on around them. Dinner is announced, and the senior resident—who is a sort of dean of the establishment, and who takes the place of honour, on the same principle that the oldest ambassador at a European capital presides at a conference—leads the way. Anything like a flow of mutual confidence at table is exceptional, and the prevailing attitude is one of unsociability, intensified by profound distrust. Gentlemen and ladies who are seated next to each other are in painful doubt as to whether it is or is not the right thing to speak. Even when the decision has been taken, and the “May I trouble you for the salt?” has been followed with some remarks on the actual state of the weather to-day, and its possible condition to-morrow, the interlocutors have not entirely shaken off the native influences of suspicion and constraint.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### EDUCATIONAL ENGLAND.

Past and Present—Education Acts of 1870 and 1876—What these have done and how received by the English People—Educational Machinery previously in Use in England—The Gradual Awakening to Educational Wants—Working of School Board System described—A Visit to a National Elementary School—General Character of Teaching—Visit of Inspector—The Passage from Primary Schools to Secondary Schools—Endowed Schools—How affected by Recent Legislation—Social and Moral Results of New System—Public Schools, Old and New—Effect of Competitive Examinations upon the Schools—The Public Schools and the Public Service—Schools and Universities—Academic Reforms accomplished and pending—National Work done by the Universities—The Profession of Teacher—Bad Secondary Schools and Proposed Remedies—Are more Inspectors wanted?—Duties of Parents—Our Public School System—The English School-boy—General Improvement in the Type—Feminine Education—General Review and Questions for the Future.

THE national machinery which now exists in England for placing a career of some kind within the reach of all may be said to date from 1870. Before this time clever and industrious boys, born in lowly stations, became powerful and distinguished men, and were the more respected because they were self-made, but the discipline and instruction which helped them to the accomplishment of these results were not supplied by the State. Their success was either the result of their own enterprise and effort, or of the private and voluntary assistance which their talents and perseverance secured. The lad of exceptional brightness, who was a cottager's son in the village school, attracted the notice of the

parson or the squire, or of some member of the family of either. News spread of the intellectual promise of the boy, and a philanthropic patron interested himself in his case. If it was the clergyman, he perhaps instructed the rising prodigy for a few hours every week in the rectory study, in Latin or Greek, history or mathematics. By-and-by the time came when it was desirable that the spur of competition should be applied, or that the young scholar should have the advantage of a deeper and a wider training than the rector could give. The good man enlisted the sympathy of friends on behalf of his protégé, secured him a nomination to the foundation of one of our big schools, or else undertook, in conjunction with others, to be responsible for the costs of his teaching. The lad grew in favour and in knowledge; he rose in quick succession through the different forms of the school, won a scholarship, and went to Oxford or Cambridge, the laureate of the freshmen of his year. Then his fortune was as good as made. He might be independent of his benefactors from that time, might even trust to repay them in the future the money they had expended on him in the past. He would finish up his college course with a First Class and a Fellowship, would go into the Church or the Bar, would make himself a name as a classical editor, would perhaps climb by a long ladder of learned works to the episcopal bench, or, embracing the law as a career, would justify the help and the expectations of his friends by ending his days as a Lord Chancellor or a judge.

On the other hand, if our ideal village youth failed to attract the notice of some generous and discriminating patron, or if to mere cleverness he did not add an indefatigable power of taking pains, he probably lived out his life in obscurity, and if he was known as more intelligent than his fellows might be known also as less well conducted. It was thus simply a matter of accident whether the cottager's clever son ever rose to the place which his abilities entitled him to fill, and what was true of the country cottager was true of the town artisan. In town and country alike, there were indeed schools for all who cared to attend, or for all who had means and leisure to attend. But there was no scheme of national and systematised teaching—nothing of that educational apparatus supplied or guaranteed by the legislature, which we have now, and which almost justifies the boast that the son of the peasant or mechanic may carry a bishop's mitre or a judge's wig in his school satchel. Children were sent to school or doomed prematurely to depressing and toilsome labour, or left to play about the streets to develop into pickpockets and thieves, fearing no other authority but the constable, according to the whim of their parents, and the degree of regard paid to the parental command.

Contrast with this the state of things which prevails to-day. At the corner of a street, in some crowded alley or reeking court, half a dozen children are playing, when suddenly a respectably dressed man,\* with a grave countenance, steps up, asks a question which

\* Women are also in some places largely employed as visitors.

causes them to flee on every side, not however before one or two of the unkempt and generally uncared-for urchins have been fairly caught in his grasp. Or, threading his way through a labyrinth of small thoroughfares, and looking in at the doors of the wretched tenements which line them on either side, he stops at one, where he sees two or three children of tender years unwashed and ill dressed. He proceeds to interrogate their mother, or the woman who is in charge of them, and notes down her replies in a pocket-book. This gentleman is one of the special visitors selected by the Board within whose district the truant or absentee children may happen to be.

If the reply given is that the child is attending a Board School, then there can be no doubt as to its efficiency, and the only question asked is as to the reason of absence. If the establishment is not under the jurisdiction of the School Board, it is probably a public "elementary school within the meaning of the Act," and in that case, too, nothing more will be said. If, on the other hand, it is a private venture school, whose character there is serious reason to doubt, an inquiry is instituted; but, as a matter of fact, it is seldom that any school is pronounced hopelessly inefficient. The machinery by which the compulsory bye-laws are enforced is simple. Every School Board employs a certain staff of visitors, each of whom keeps a schedule of all the children of school age in the district. It is the visitor's duty to ascertain that all those boys and girls whose names are down upon his

list are being regularly educated ; if any cases in which they are not come before him, he reports them to the committee to which these matters specially belong ; the case is inquired into, and the next step is the despatch of a notice (A) to the parent, admonishing him to send the boy or girl to school. If this is not acted upon, a second notice (B) requires the parent to attend and explain the reasons of his neglect before the divisional committee, the members of which have then for the first time cognisance of the matter. If extreme poverty is alleged the matter is further investigated, and the School Board may order the payment of a portion of the fees. If, after receiving the second warning, the parent takes no heed, he is summoned to appear before a magistrate, who may impose any fine not exceeding in amount five shillings, inclusive of costs.

Such, at least, is the law, and it is due, on the one hand, to the good sense of the School Board authorities, on the other hand, and more particularly, to the law-abiding qualities of the English people, that it works with so little friction. The principle of compulsion which was implied in the Education Act, and has since been explicitly asserted by the School Boards and school attendance committees, was one which, if not in theory new to the English people, had in practice received the anticipatory condemnation of those who in such a matter might claim to be considered experts. Compulsion, indeed, under a certain shape, existed in the workhouse, in the industrial school, in the training-ship, and in the

half-time system, but the general adoption of the compulsory principle was pronounced impracticable by many well known and experienced members of Parliament, while one of the school inspectors declared his opinion that if attempted to be carried out it "would produce a national commotion not much less dangerous than that which attended a poll-tax." Again, a stipendiary magistrate of the midland counties said that "if compulsory attendance at school should become the law he would refuse to administer it." What has happened? The Education Act of 1870 came into force twelve months after it was passed; that of 1876 began to be applied in 1877. These two measures have already covered the country with a network of School Boards and attendance committees—the latter appointed by town councils in urban districts, and boards of guardians in rural districts. Attendance committees are invested with the same power of enacting compulsory bye-laws as the School Boards, and although they do not so effectually avail themselves of it as School Boards, they had succeeded, in 1878, in bringing another million and three-quarters of the population under direct legal compulsion to send their children to school. In all, there were in 1878 two-thirds of the population of England and Wales under the operation of compulsory education.

It must be always remembered that the Education Act of 1870 was not, like the Reform Act of 1867, a second instalment of legislation of which the first-



fruits had already been tasted; but that, in its strangeness and novelty to the English people, it was absolutely revolutionary, that it has signally interfered with the innate and traditional English love of personal independence, and that it has involved a heavy increase to the rates that Englishmen pay. The legislation of 1870 applied the theory, and to some extent the practice, of the state system of education in vogue in Prussia to free and independent England. No such organised intervention between parent and child, no such systematic inquisition into those private affairs which Englishmen are in the habit of keeping religiously to themselves, had ever been attempted in this country. Until the passing of this Act, not merely had the State made no attempts to regulate the amount and kind of teaching provided for English children, but it declined to recognise the existence of the schools except when they appeared as applicants for its pecuniary aid. Then, and only then, the State sent agents of its own to see that the conditions upon which this aid was granted were not violated. Not merely the foundation of the educational edifice, but the entire fabric, consisted of the organisations of voluntary enterprise. The Christian Knowledge Society had established schools for more than a century; the National Society had promoted the education of the poor in the principles of the Established Church since 1811; the British and Foreign School Society, which is anti-sectarian, had been at work since 1814; Nonconformists, Roman Catholic and Protestant, notably the

Wesleyans, had their own schools governed by their own special committees. Add to this the municipal schools, the parochial schools, the private adventure schools, and the public schools for the higher classes, the schools of the Ragged School Union for the lowest of all, and the account of the educational machinery of the country previous to 1870 is complete.

It is true that an essay by John Foster, in 1819, "On the Evils of Popular Ignorance," appealed by its arguments and revelations to the fears of statesmen, and to the philanthropy of the benevolent. Lord Brougham lent the weight of his eloquence and influence in the same direction, and the commission known as Brougham's Commission was issued. The report of this inquiry, with its disclosures of ignorance and depravity, shocked and alarmed the nation. Brougham, by picturing the social degradation of the country, exposing the "misdirection, waste, and plunder of educational endowments," and by arguing that education was the best security for order and tranquillity, succeeded in arousing the authorities who had been hitherto hostile, indifferent, or sceptical. Still twelve years passed before the tide in favour of education set in. Statesmen were opposed to the movement. Lord Melbourne characteristically "questioned the advantage of general education as a means of promoting knowledge in the world, since people got on without it." The Bishop of Durham "believed that education was not likely to make its way among the poor;" and the Bishop of Exeter said that if, when

rector, he had started a school in his parish, the squire would have laughed in his face.

For the first time, in 1833, the private societies received subsidies from the State. One year later a parliamentary commission to inquire into scholastic affairs was appointed. In 1839 the Committee of the Privy Council on Education was formed. Grants were only given henceforth on conditions which the Government laid down, but though some of our public men ventured to anticipate a centralised educational administration for the whole of England, religious differences and a popular jealousy of State interference hopelessly barred the way. Subsequent advances, indeed, were made in the direction of that goal, which was ultimately arrived at in 1870: first, by the strong but unsuccessful manifestations of parliamentary and of popular opinion in 1847; secondly, by the old code of the Committee of Council; thirdly, by the new code of 1861; but no step had been taken to establish the doctrine of the rights of the State to step in between parent and child.

The work done by the Education Act of 1870 may be very briefly sketched, and represents the actual educational machinery under which we are now living, and are likely to live for many years to come. The whole of Great Britain south of the Tweed is covered with a network of school districts. Of these districts, some are under School Boards and others under school attendance committees. Even in School Board districts there are plenty of schools under voluntary

management, and in all districts where there is no School Board the alternative is a species of voluntary management. School Boards have, with certain limits, and subject to the approval of the Committee of Council, and the royal sanction, plenary powers—they may make school attendance compulsory or permissive, deciding what excuse shall be accepted as valid. The School Boards have also authority to regulate, subject to the Education Department, what extra subjects shall be taught, and whether religious instruction of any kind shall be given. At Birmingham there is a strong feeling against any religious teaching at all, the simple reading of the Bible not excepted. In the metropolis there exists what is called the London compromise, which is identical in principle with the rule of the British and Foreign School Society, and which allows the Bible to be read, instruction to be given from it, and the use of prayers and hymns. The chairman of the London School Board stated, in 1876, that out of 126,000 school children, Biblical instruction was only refused in 124 cases. More than eighty-three per cent. of the School Boards throughout England have sanctioned the reading and the simple undenominational teaching of the Bible. In theory, education is not gratuitous, although the fees of the poorest children may be remitted by School Boards, or paid by guardians in voluntary or Board schools.

The points of contact between the local School Board and the central authority of the Education Department in Whitehall are frequent, and the

control exercised by the latter over the former is close and constant. No School Board has the power of erecting any new building unless in the first place the department gives a general approval of the scheme. The second step is the approval of the site, the third of the plan of the proposed new building. After these preliminaries have been complied with, the department may proceed to give its approval to the application of the School Board for permission to borrow money from the Public Works Loan Commissioners. Finally, no School Board can enforce its compulsory bye-laws unless these have received the sanction of Whitehall.

It also rests with the Education Department to decide, from time to time, upon what conditions grants are to be made to schools from the Treasury. These grants, at present, are given indifferently to all schools, whether Board or denominational, which satisfy certain conditions, and are, in legislative phraseology, public elementary schools within the meaning of the Act. In the first place, religious instruction is not to be obligatory on any child attending school; secondly, religious instruction, if given at all, must be given either at the end or the beginning of school-time; and thirdly, the school is always to be open to Her Majesty's inspector. The principle upon which these grants are estimated is as follows. Four shillings a year may be claimed by the school managers for every boy or girl who has attended the requisite number of times, another shilling is allowed if singing forms

part of the ordinary course, and a shilling more if the discipline and the organisation are pronounced satisfactory. The grant may be raised above the figures already mentioned provided that the standards in which the children pass their examination are sufficiently high. These standards are six in number, and roughly correspond to the years of age between 7 and 12. The average fees charged in Board Schools are from 1d. to 6d. a week, and in no case is a School Board allowed to charge more than 9d.

Let us enter one of these Board Schools, and see the educational machine at work. The building is handsome and roomy, and it is only one of thousands which are scattered throughout the country. Closely adjoining it is the house of the schoolmaster and the schoolmistress, both of them duly certificated teachers, who are in receipt of £200 and £150 a year respectively.\* The bell is ringing, and the children are swarming into the class-rooms. Perhaps, as you enter the great central chamber of the structure, you will meet one or two ministers of different denominations, who have been giving, in the half-hour immediately before the school-work of the day begins, religious instruction to the sons and daughters of parents whose creeds they respectively represent.† There is a clattering

\* These figures must be accepted as provisional, though approximately correct. A return is being prepared, while these pages are going through the press, which will show exactly what the average salary is. It should further be noted that in London the teachers have not houses provided for them, which will explain why in the capital the salaries paid are higher than elsewhere.

† In London, and in some other places, this religious teaching may be, and usually is, given by the "responsible teacher" of the school.

of desks thrown open, of slates thrown down, and all the noise attendant upon two or three hundred boys and girls—the latter being in another but contiguous part of the building—settling down into their places. The children of both sexes are clean and well-clad, to a degree that is really surprising, when it is remembered that with scarcely an exception their fathers are mechanics or artisans. If much in this respect is due to the care and attention of their parents, something also is to be attributed to the supervision exercised by the teacher. The schoolmaster who has the art of management will very soon create amongst his scholars a feeling favourable to decency and cleanliness, and you may know a really well from a badly administered school, not only by the results of the examination, but by the general appearance and manners of the children.

Lessons proceed according to the plan indicated on the time-table—a complete programme of the educational arrangements for the classes, which are both numbered and regulated according to the standard in which they are taught—displayed in a conspicuous position, and approved of by the Education Department in London, and by the district inspector. Possibly before the morning is over, this official will pay one of his visits without notice. His object is to see that the prescribed regulations are being duly carried out, that the principle upon which both boys and girls are being taught is sound, and that discipline is efficiently kept. He will perhaps test the general intelligence of the children by asking them questions, not immediately

out of their books, but rather suggested by the subjects of study, and, pointing to the coloured maps, diagrams, and illustrations of animals and natural phenomena, which hang upon the walls, will endeavour to ascertain how far an acquaintance with words implies any corresponding appreciation of facts. It is by this kind of test that he will judge the quality of what are known in our elementary schools as "object lessons." Here it is but too likely that he will discover that it is not so much ideas which have been acquired as names which have been mechanically learnt. The boys and girls, from frequent hearing of the stereotyped explanatory phrases and formulæ of the pupil teacher, can give a conventional description of certain objects or animals, but only in such a way as shows that these animals or objects are regarded less as existences in nature than as scholastic abstractions. It may be that the inspector, himself constructing a verbal picture of some beast of the field, bird of the air, or product of the soil, elicits from the child the information that it applies to some entirely different species of animals or phenomena. Of a want of glib familiarity with words the school inspector has no reason to complain; it is the rational assimilation of the knowledge conveyed by text-books that he too often discovers to be entirely wanting. Nor are the text-books themselves uniformly satisfactory. In the case of reading manuals the letter-press often consists of silly or extravagant stories, instead of enshrining, as it might do, the narrative of events of real interest



and importance. The key-note of the complaint made by the school inspectors in their periodical reports is a general want of intelligence pervading the whole system—want of intelligence on the part of the scholars, want of intelligence in the application of the instruments of teaching.

It is plain from these official documents that both as to the regulation of the subjects taught, and the manner in which the teaching is given, much remains to be done. In addition to the elementary subjects, grammar, geography, history, literature, physiology, botany, Euclid, algebra, domestic economy, French, German, and Latin are offered for examination by a growing percentage of children. There seems to be a great danger of too many subjects being attempted. Subjects, good in themselves, are ill-advisedly chosen for the children. Thus, we are in one instance told, “none of those presented in physical geography passed, and out of thirty presented in physiology only two were able to give intelligent answers to the questions asked, and the rest was mere cram.” Again, “grammar and geography were fair; history very poor indeed.” History, apparently, is not a popular subject. “The quality of the geography is not good; the definitions are well enough known by heart, but there is not the slightest idea of applying the knowledge.” “A class will give the Jordan as an example of a river, but will look doubtful if the Thames is suggested.” “Grammar is more successfully taught than geography. Reading is a mere mechanical exercise, and as such is fair,

but intelligence and expression are wanting. Writing still needs improvement. The spelling is fair, but punctuation is scarcely attended to. Composition is unsatisfactory. Arithmetic is good so far as the lower standards are concerned, but the tables of weights and measures are imperfectly known. Needlework is fairly taught in most schools, and very well in a few." Again, "domestic economy—a subject of equally imperative importance as the foregoing—is in a very unsatisfactory condition."

This deficiency suggests some very obvious but very important considerations. The great failing of the English working classes is their disregard of the economies of life. The great cause of their wastefulness is their ignorance. Instances are not unknown in which a labourer's wife has been seen to throw a piece of mutton, sufficiently good for human consumption, to the cat, for the simple reason that she did not know how to cook it. Again, the only way of reconciling parents to the loss of the money value of their children's labour is by appealing to the unselfish against the selfish principle, and convincing them, if possible, that while they are poorer by their children's school attendance, their children will in the end be richer. But in agricultural districts there is little in the instruction given in elementary schools to make the parents feel that their children are likely to be gainers by school attendance. They may admit the necessity of reading and writing, but they will contend that much else is taught which is superfluous. It

may be allowed that there is something in this. To gain the parliamentary grant is naturally a paramount object with the teacher, and that is only to be done by educating the children up to the point and in the subjects prescribed by the Education Department. The teaching thus lacks too often any direct reference to the occupations in which the children will engage after they leave school; it is not, in other words, calculated to give them a greater interest in their work, and, therefore, to make them better workmen.\*

So far as statistics prove anything, they show a considerable diminution of crime since efforts have first been made systematically to educate the people, not only in schools, but in the graces and virtues of gentleness and humanity. In the interval between 1805 and 1841 the population grew at the rate of 79 per cent., and the increase of criminals had been sixfold greater, namely, 482 per cent. Contrast with the thirty odd years included in the foregoing estimate the interval, first, between 1842 and 1855; secondly, between 1855 and 1875. During the former of these periods the population increased by

\* The importance of this kind of technical and industrial education was emphatically insisted on not long ago by a member of the Gloucestershire Chamber of Agriculture, Captain de Winton, who said that he "should like to see in connection with day school an industrial room, furnished with models illustrating the best mode of laying a hedge, thatching a cottage, building a rick, &c., as well as of the more complex agricultural implements, and he would have the boys taught to answer such questions as 'How would you clean out that ditch?' 'How would you lay that hedge?' 'How would you thatch that rick?' 'How would you plough?' and so forth. He thought that then, when the lad went into the field, the practical work would come easy to him." The difficulty, it is said, would be when you had built your industrial room and fitted it up with models, to get a teacher capable of using and explaining them.

2,500,000, but there was no increase of crime; during the latter, the growth of the population was 4,475,000, while the decrease in committals was 2,298, in convictions 2,074, in sentences of imprisonment 1,140, in sentences of penal servitude 935. The contrast may be made clearer still by taking the two years 1843 and 1873. Between these dates there was an increase in the population at the rate of 41·46 per cent., while the most serious offences short of murder had decreased by 66·73 per cent. These, it must be remembered—from 1843 to 1873—are the three decades which coincide with a marked development of the means of moral training and healthy recreation for the masses—churches, public libraries, playgrounds, parks, schools.\* The connection between crime and ignorance is disputed, and it has been remarked that the smallest amount of crime was often found in two districts in which there was most ignorance—Lancashire and Wales. The answer is this: Wales is innocent not because it is ignorant, but because it enjoys other conditions which are favourable to immunity from crime, viz., a sparse population, infrequency of towns of great size, little accumulation of unprotected property. When these conditions are wanting, the immunity of Wales from crime disappears; viz., Glamorganshire, with some considerable towns, and a population

\* For the facts and figures in the above estimate, as also for those which follow on the connection between population and crime in England and Wales, and the relative size of the Welsh counties, see Lord Aberdare's opening address at the Brighton meeting of the National Association for the Promotion of Social Science, 1875, pp. 7, 8, 9, 10, 35, 36.

of 400,000, produces crime nearly equal to the rest of Wales, with a population of 800,000. On the other hand, statistics show that in Lancashire, in a given year, an indictable offence was committed by 1 out of every 251 of the population, while in Cardigan-shire the proportion was 1 in every 3,338, and both populations were equally ignorant. Again, it has been ascertained that from 1836 to 1848, out of 335,429 persons committed, 304,772, or more than 90 in 100, were wholly illiterate, and that about 9 per cent. could read and write well. In 1874, out of 157,780 persons committed, 95·8 per cent. were uninstructed, and 3·7 per cent. could read and write well. Hence it is a legitimate inference, that while education has progressed since 1848, the criminal class is at present more profoundly ignorant than it was.

That the new educational machinery works perfectly, or that the principles on which the attempt to work it is made are uniformly sound, would be too much to assert. We have seen that in primary schools there is a tendency on the part of teachers to pay attention rather to the subject taught than to the manner in which it is taught, or to the influence which the teaching of it is calculated to have upon the mind. The latest official report tells us of "the large number of children who are not known to be attending school," of the "small number, even of those who do attend school, who do so with anything approaching regularity ; of the large proportion of these last who are not presented to the inspector

to give proof of the results of their instruction, and the meagre nature of the results attained by many of those who are examined." Again we read, "out of 1,335,118 scholars examined, as many as 655,435, being over ten years of age, ought to have been presented in Standards IV.—VI. Only 264,800 were so presented, while 390,575 were presented in standards suited for children of seven, eight, and nine years of age."

Apparently we have not in this matter quite decided what we want and ought to do. Are we prepared to institute a vast system of free education in England; which would mean an immense addition to the rates. In 1878 the State paid £11,000 for grants to elementary schools in aid of extra subjects, such as French, German, Latin, physical science. What has been said above, as to the expediency of teaching children in agricultural districts, that is likely to benefit them when they are apprenticed to their work, certainly applies here; and if these extra subjects are to be maintained, they should be as much as possible industrial. The financial pace at which we are proceeding is of a rapidity that may alarm some people. In 1839 the first grant ever made for education was £20,000, the estimate for 1879 was two millions and a half. But while the expenditure has increased at the rate of 167 per cent., the school attendance has only increased at the rate of 80 per cent. There has been a like advance in the cost of education. Ten years ago it was estimated that 30s. was the annual expenditure

of each child in an elementary school. Now, in Board Schools, it cannot be put at a lower total than £2. "The School Board," said the Vice-President of the Council in the House of Commons, in August, 1878, "spend now three and two-thirds times as much from the rates as they get for the grants. If they had the whole of the grant they would be levying £6,750,000 in rates alone." Without going into the dispute as to whether this increased expenditure is the result of the ascendancy which Board Schools are acquiring over voluntary schools, it is the fact that the education rate in London has doubled in three years—was 3d. in 1876, and in 1879 is 6d.\*

What becomes of the boys and girls after their four years' training in one of the elementary schools of the country—whether a Board or a voluntary school—that is, at and after the age of fourteen? The vast majority of both sexes proceed to get their living as best they can, the girls procure domestic employment, the boys are apprenticed to manufacturers or tradesmen. But as amongst the girls there is a small percentage who become pupil teachers, and who subsequently go to training colleges, so amongst the boys may there be one or two who are destined to rise by their abilities and industry above the position to which they were

\* This increase, however, is not due to the increased cost per head, which, in point of fact, so far as it falls upon the rates, has, on the whole, slightly decreased, but to the circumstance that a far larger number of children are on the roll and in regular attendance. It is as well to state that in the last eight years the roll of London has doubled, and the average attendance more than doubled, the greater part of this increase being due to the action of the Board.

born. Here, no doubt, there yet remains a great work to do. In some primary schools scholarships have been founded by private benevolence, as well as by the munificence of the great City companies, who, it should be noted, are also doing much to assist the development of technical and industrial teaching. These prizes are competed for annually, and they enable successful candidates to pass on to secondary schools and complete or mature their education. In a few towns, such as Bedford, there is a graduated system of schools, and a boy may naturally pass from the lowest class in the school which is at the bottom of the scale, to the highest in that which is at the top, and whence he may proceed to the university, with more of the educational advantages and many of the social which he would have enjoyed at Eton, after an expenditure by his parents of £1,500.

In most towns, and in many places which are little more than villages, there are endowed schools, grammar schools, and others of different grades, and if the pupil can afford to spend further time upon the business of education, he will be able to procure admission to one of these. The third grade of endowed schools is on a level with elementary schools of the country; in the second grade, boys learn Latin as well as elementary Greek, remaining at them till about the age of sixteen. In schools of the first grade boys receive the highest liberal training known in England, and remain till eighteen or nineteen. Each of the institutions which these classes comprise is now as genuinely



national as the Board School itself. It is, however, only in the last few years that they have acquired this character. Before the time of the Endowed Schools' Commission and the legislation which followed it, in 1869 and 1873, these institutions did exceedingly little work, and the endowments were generally monopolised by members of the Church of England. The effect of the new legislation was to make them independent of religious beliefs, both as regards the benefits of their endowments and the appointment of their teachers, wherever the original statutes of the founders did not specifically prohibit such a change. In addition to this, provision was made for the teaching of natural sciences and modern languages. The reorganisation of these schools by the Government, with the new schemes of teaching in them drawn up, have resulted in an educational revolution, second only to that represented by the Elementary Education Act of 1870, and have provided such connecting-links as can be said to exist between the rudimentary schools of the country and its highest academic training. What the Government did for those institutions, specifically known as endowed schools by Act of Parliament, it did also for what are called, by way of distinction, public schools. A special commission appointed in 1861, inquired into the nine large endowed schools of Eton, Winchester, Westminster, Charterhouse, St. Paul's, Merchant Tailors', Harrow, Rugby, and Shrewsbury. It is to these that the Public Schools' Acts have exclusive reference, while the great multitude of the remainder—

upwards of a thousand institutions in all—is provided for by the Endowed Schools' Acts, based upon the reports of different commissions of inquiry. Both in the case of the nine schools specially mentioned, and of the remainder, governing bodies were appointed, in which the masters and pupils, as well as the great body of the parents, the universities, and the learned societies were represented. In all cases, an under-master has, in the case of any dispute with the head-master, the right of appeal to the governing body. The governing bodies had also the power to alter the qualifications of age and knowledge required of a pupil entering the school, to award scholarships and exhibitions as the result of competitive examinations, to provide for exemption from religious instruction, and to abolish a clerical qualification as compulsory upon head-masters and under-masters. The new relations which were thus established between governing bodies, head-masters, and their subordinates, did not at first work uniformly well; the transition from the old régime to the new was attended by much friction and by some collisions; there were troubles at Rugby, there were differences which did not become quite so famous at Eton. Happily these things now seem to belong to past history; the schools are doing their work fairly, and the masters, pupils, and parents are settling down to the changed conditions.

The great public schools have felt the upward educational movement of the time, just as they have admitted, in the re-arrangement of their governing

bodies, the supremacy of the State. In the last thirty years there have sprung up throughout the country a host of new claimants for the honours and prestige which the nine public schools used to divide between them. Marlborough, Cheltenham, Leamington, Brighton, Bath, Malvern, and Clifton, have each of them become the centres of teaching which gives them a claim to be practically considered upon the public school level. These new seats of learning owe their rise partly to the immense development of the middle class, which has been witnessed in the last few years, partly to the extension of the competitive examination system. It is this competition which has had much to do with the efforts at reform made by the authorities of our older public schools, and with the attention given to mathematics, modern languages, and physical science.

For some years after the institution of army entrance examinations, and the application of the competitive system, either in a free and unrestricted or else modified form, to the Civil Service, both in India and at home, the entire work of the preparation of candidates for these ordeals was in the hands of private tutors, better known by the generic term of "crammers." A "modern side" had indeed been instituted in which special care was given to modern languages, mathematics, and physical science; but the work in these departments was generally done in a perfunctory manner, and the experiment during its earlier stages was only partially successful. The

crammer was the recognised and necessary supplement to the schoolmaster. Boys who were destined for the army were systematically idle at school, because they knew, or confidently hoped, that they would be able to make up for their idleness by six months' or a year's work under the crammer's auspices. The tendency of this state of things was to establish a most undesirable divorce between the public schools and the public service; the effects of this divorce still remain, though in one or two ways the attempt has been made to remove them, and to increase the inducements for lads to go to the universities, after leaving school, instead of to the crammers. Thus at the present day, special privileges are offered to candidates for the Indian Civil Service who may have gone to Oxford or Cambridge, and a certain number of commissions in the army are annually reserved for undergraduates at these universities. Again, as regards the Indian Civil Service, the reduction in the standard for the age of entrance was intended to have the effect of bringing up candidates straight from school. Most of the great schools of the country have readily and effectually availed themselves of the opportunity thus offered, and special classes for the benefit of candidates for the Indian Civil Service, and since the English Civil Service has been reorganised, and its most remunerative positions thrown open to competitions, for that also, have been set on foot. But as yet there is nothing to make one think that the crammer's occupation is likely to disappear altogether.

The spirit of the age is favourable to specialists and experts, and the crammer is simply an educational practitioner who has made certain examinational requirements his particular study, just as the medical specialist has concentrated his thoughts and experiences upon a single branch of disease.

The fact, however, remains, that much has been done towards bringing the curriculum of the great schools of England into harmony with the requirements of special public examinations instituted by the State. It is an attempt at organisation, the success of which we cannot expect suddenly to witness, an honest effort to provide that valuable and important machinery of which before we had nothing. In other respects, too, there may be seen signs of the endeavour to secure something like uniformity in our system of higher education. The two universities have instituted an examining board which, on payment of a comparatively small fee, is willing to test annually the proficiency of the pupils of every school that cares to enter into an arrangement with it. Success in this examination is accepted by the authorities of Oxford in lieu of passing the little-go examination. But so far as the universities are concerned, this is only one of many proofs which they now afford of their anxiety to adapt themselves to the altered conditions of the times. Nor are the colleges idle; they are altering their statutes in the direction which the commissioners may probably recommend, are endowing new professorships out of their funds, and have, in some

cases, abolished clerical restrictions in the case of their headships. Already, too, they had done more than this. In 1858, local middle-class examinations were established, conducted by members of Oxford and Cambridge, and entitling those who passed in them to the degree of Associate of Arts. Since then several colleges, both at Oxford and Cambridge, have given scholarships and exhibitions to the most distinguished of the successful candidates in these provincial ordeals, as an inducement for them to go to the university and reside. Ten years later, the scheme of unattached students was adopted, and young men were henceforth enabled to enrol themselves members of the university without being members of colleges. The scheme was recommended on its earliest introduction by motives of economy, and has since proved wonderfully successful in practice. The colleges themselves have done much to help this attempt; they have, in many instances, opened their lectures to unattached students, and they have been frequently willing to receive such members of this body as cared to enrol themselves upon their books on exceptionally favourable terms. As the universities have done much to adapt their distinctions to the necessities of practical life by founding new examination schools in such subjects as modern history and law, physical science and theology, so the colleges have increased their educational efficiency by combining their tutorial staff for collective instruction.

Far outside their own geographical limits, from one

end of Great Britain to the other, Oxford and Cambridge are doing a great educational work. The university extension movement is gaining ground daily. As by the middle-class examinations, boys who had not the chance of going to Oxford and Cambridge had it placed within their power to gain a certificate of academic excellence, so Oxford and Cambridge have brought their harmonising influences within the reach of those whose school-days have come to a premature close. In almost every great town of England there are lectures, given periodically by Oxford and Cambridge graduates of high standing, not merely in Latin and Greek, history, philosophy, and literature, but in political economy, and the various branches of physical science. The course of lectures on these subjects are followed by examinations; nor is it unknown to find a Sheffield or Birmingham artisan, clad in his working dress, who has gained an Oxford or Cambridge diploma in political economy.

In the new relations established between English schools and universities by means of the examining board, of which mention has already been made, indications of an effort may be observed on the part of schoolmasters—for it was to the schoolmasters as much as to the university authorities that the new scheme was first due—to secure for themselves a better defined position. There are, indeed, two features especially prominent in the relations which have been developed during the last few years in schoolmasters as a body on the one hand, and in schools in their relation to the universities on the other. The schools have

been increasingly putting themselves into a sort of clientship to a university; schoolmasters have more and more been organising themselves with a view of attaining something like uniformity in their educational systems, and the power of making their voice heard in scholastic matters generally. The periodical conferences of headmasters have been one important step in this direction. These meetings are now about ten years old, and in the last two or three years assistant masters have been admitted to them. Further progress along the same line is in contemplation, and there is an idea of holding educational congresses, open to all teachers and examiners of first and second grade schools, and to all professors and teachers at the universities. Much work has also been done by the College of Preceptors—an association whose object it is to improve the quality of teachers, principally in middle-class schools, which grants diplomas to schoolmasters who have not been at universities, and who are especially examined by the college on the theory and practice of education. It also gives certificates to schoolmistresses. These examinations have been held half-yearly since 1854, and between two and three thousand teachers of both classes are annually examined. Delegates of its bodies also examine entire schools. The special feature of the body, however, is that it exists for the benefit and instruction of the teachers themselves. Education is studied, and lectures are given on education as a science and an art. For a long time the college has been endeavouring to obtain registration by the Government for teachers



in public and private schools. This would virtually amount to a legal enactment that no person should be accepted as a teacher who does not possess a certificate from some recognised board of examiners.

On all sides the complaint is made that our supply of middle-class secondary schools is defective alike in quantity and quality. One remedy is that suggested by Mr. Matthew Arnold, an organised system of State inspection such as now exists in our primary schools, and, by means of the new university examinations, in some of our public schools as well. To hope that this will cure the evil is perhaps to expect too much from the machinery of inspection. No doubt the state of things recorded by the reports of local delegates of the University of Oxford, as existing in our grammar schools and others, is sufficiently unsatisfactory. "The results of these matriculation examinations," write the delegates, "prove that the education of boys is very inefficient in English schools; that their ignorance is by no means confined to classical subjects, but is equally marked in mathematics." Hence the inference is that there is need of a superior authority to interfere on the behalf of the middle-class parents of England, and that this can only be done by a Minister of Education sending his inspectors to see how the work of education is carried on, not only in the case of the clever boys who get to the top of the school, but of the many who are allowed to drop behind and to do no real work. Let it be granted that the facts are as the delegates and others describe them

to be, and that the parents are quite right in attributing them to the unsatisfactory teaching in the grammar schools of the United Kingdom; does it follow that the cure is fresh legislation and more school inspection?

The report of the Endowed Schools Commission drew attention to many instances of systematically careless and imperfect teaching in secondary middle-class schools. The public did not, however, require to master the contents of all these volumes to know that some of those who had embraced the profession of education had no educating zeal, taste, or capacity. Sometimes the pedagogue was a highly agreeable specimen of the English clergyman and gentleman, fond of society, fond of shooting, a capital conversationalist, perhaps something of an æsthetic dilettante. He took an active part in the local cricket club, and was a leading spirit in a resuscitated toxophilite society. He was one of the most delightful persons in the world to fill a vacant place at a picnic party, and he had an abundant repertory of songs, which he sang with great feeling and judgment. But in an evil hour for himself and others he had taken to schoolmastering. When he was elected to his position by the governors—the present governing bodies had not then come into existence—the school was fairly well-to-do. There were plenty of day-boys, and a considerable number of boarders. Nothing more than management, labour, and energy were wanted to perpetuate its success. These were attributes possessed

neither by the new head-master nor his wife. Socially, they were each of them great acquisitions. Of all things in the world for which the pair was least adapted was the drudgery or slavery, as it seemed to both of them, of perpetually having the responsibility of boys on their hands. The practical result was, of course, what might have been expected. The school went down, the boys learned nothing, were plucked in every examination for which they presented themselves, and finally the head-master himself considered it advisable to accept a small living.

Provincial England at one time abounded in such experiences as these. Frequently the schoolmaster was something more than a man of pleasure—was really a scholar, had a pretty turn for physical science, or archæology, or metaphysics. The unimpeachable character of the pursuit did not, in practice, much mend matters. The boys were neglected, and the fame and fortune of the school began steadily to wane. It would be too much to say that such instances as these are altogether obsolete at the present day. They are certainly much less common than they were, and not less certainly it is very much easier than it was even a decade ago for the ordinary parent to procure a sound training of the higher sort for his boy. Of course all ground for the complaints of indignant parents is not removed. The doubt is whether it is necessary or desirable to attempt to remove them by Act of Parliament. It is, and it will remain to the end of the chapter, just as impossible to improve unsatisfactory schools

and bad systems of teaching—or systems of teaching which are in reality no teaching at all—off the face of the earth by adding to the army of school inspectors at present scattered over the surface of the United Kingdom, as to eliminate criminal propensities from the minds of the lower classes by indefinitely reinforcing the ranks of police superintendents. There are two real kinds of school inspection, the direct and indirect. The latter is, or should be, quite as effective as the former, and may be enforced in all cases in which the former does not exist—that is, in every kind of school which is a grade or two removed above the primary school. There are the Oxford and Cambridge middle-class examinations. There are the periodical examinations conducted by members of a regular staff of Oxford examiners, which secure, as has been explained above, for the successful candidate immunity from the ordeal of “Responsions” when he has matriculated on the Isis. There are innumerable examinations for Civil Service appointments, commissions in the army, Ceylon writer-ships, scholarships, and exhibitions at the different universities of the United Kingdom. Now, each one of these really does the duty of an indirect school inspector, and if the parent wishes to have presumptive and, as he may fairly regard it, almost positive proof of the efficiency of any school, he has but to find out what its representatives, in other words its pupils, do in their public trials. Here are data on which any parent can base his judgment, and they are data available

to all who care to have access to them. The standard is one by which no schoolmaster will think it unjust that the merits of his establishment should be gauged. Occasionally he may be afflicted with an exceptionally stupid set of school-boys. But the doctrine of averages holds good; and in the long run the stupidity and cleverness of school-boys bear the same mutual proportions.

The truth is, that it is the parents themselves who decide how much education is to be given to the boys, and of what kind. Money will do much, but there are certain things which it is not to be wished that it should do. It is not, for instance, to be desired that the payment by the father of a sum, very likely a considerable sum, of money should relieve him of the obligation of personally judging what progress his boy is making, and what are the influences, mental and moral, under which he is growing up.

If subjects taught at school are tabooed at home, on the ground that they are of little practical utility and do not pay, is it likely that a boy will work hard at them? These are the questions which the suggestion of inspection for grammar schools very naturally suggests to schoolmasters. Says a schoolmaster: "A parent consulting me a few days ago about his son, a boy of some ability, but very much afraid of exertion, concluded by saying, 'I don't want my lad to grow up a fool; but I don't care for him to work very hard. It is not necessary, for he will

have plenty of money.'” Well may the schoolmaster ask, “Whom would an inspector blame for this boy’s ignorance and backwardness?” The parent above referred to probably belonged to that class of parents who send their boys to school not so much to learn as to make acquaintances. The purely social mission of school life is enlarged upon in the present day by parents before boys to a very ill-advised extent. And though we hear more about education now than at any former period in our history, it must always be remembered that there is much at the present age which is distinctly anti-studious. To play in the University Eleven, or to row in the University Eight, carries with it more of popular prestige than to have won a first-class and a Balliol or Trinity fellowship.

The general principle on which the great English public schools may be described as being administered is, first, the recognition and organisation of the natural tendencies of boys; secondly, that of appealing to their good feeling and honour. Each of these ideas finds its expression in what is called the monitorial or the prefectual system. This system is really one of government by the governed, and as perfected by Dr. Arnold, is the distinguishing feature of our public schools. It is, we are told, natural and inevitable that big boys should control small, and an organised system prevents abuse of this control. Secondly, it is part of education to learn to rule. Thirdly, it is a waste of power not to utilise the governing instinct of senior boys for work which

they can do as well as, or better than, salaried masters. We thus have three distinct lines of discipline; first, that of the head-master; secondly, that of the assistant-masters; thirdly, that of the boys. It was impossible to put down fagging by any laws. Human nature prompted strong boys to exercise an authority which was very often despotic over the weak. The question, accordingly, with which schoolmasters had to deal presented itself as a problem of regulating this authority amongst boys in such a way as to prevent its degenerating into bullying, and to establish some compensating principle to that of "might is right." Hence our schoolmasters have officially recognised fagging by the one or two upper forms of their schools. In this way they have to a great extent succeeded in turning possible and probable bullies into actual disciplinarians. The head-master officially acknowledges the jurisdiction which the bigger boys have over the smaller, and in return for this sanction, the bigger boys are held by the head-master responsible for the moderate exercise of their powers, and by way of further reciprocity, pledge themselves to promote order and discipline throughout the school. This system has no doubt certain disadvantages. Boys, it may be argued, do not choose their leaders on the same principle as headmasters choose their prefects: there is, thus, a danger lest the depositary of the delegated authority of the head-master should not be coincident with the wielder of the actual authority amongst his school-fellows. Again, it is contended by some critics that

the exclusive concentration of schoolboy responsibility among a limited number causes the remainder, who are the great majority, to ignore the fact that they have any responsibility at all.

On the whole, however, fagging and the monitorial power do not work badly at our public schools. Scandals occasionally there are, but the worst scandals do not occur in schools where the jurisdiction of the prefects or monitors is openly recognised, and where fagging is most officially sanctioned, but rather in those schools where the limits within which the former is kept and the latter is not allowed to exceed are very narrow. At Eton, though the prefectual system has not been nominally adopted, the head boy of each boarding house is expected to keep things straight chiefly by setting a good example. Sixth form boys generally are trusted to preserve order, and have the right to fag. In almost all schools where the prefectual system does exist its representatives are allowed to use the cane. At Winchester a prefect may cane on his own responsibility, but in serious cases the head boy of the school is consulted. At Harrow no grave offence is punished, whether by chastisement or otherwise, without a meeting of the head boys of the boarding house, and their common approval of the steps taken. At Westminster no monitor can cane or punish in any way, unless in the presence of, and with the approval of, the head boy of the house, or of the entire school, according to the nature of the offence committed. In all cases appeal lies to the head-



master; no monitor may punish for an offence against himself; the monitors, as a body, are formally invested with power by the head-master, and promise in writing to act faithfully. At Marlborough there is also an appeal to the head-master; two prefects must be present at a caning, and the strokes must not exceed twelve. At Shrewsbury no caning or imposition is given, except upon the adjudication of the whole body of prefects.

Such, in brief outline, being the English public school system, what is its product? The first thing which strikes one in the school-boy of to-day is that his views of life are much more extensive than formerly. He seems to be much more in contact with the actual cares and responsibilities of life. There is no diminution of freshness or of capacity for healthy enjoyment, but he is manifestly not without a sense that existence has its business, and that that business he will sooner or later be called on to discharge. The happy-go-lucky temper, the vague belief that all will come right in the end, is more or less superseded by an intelligent recognition of the circumstances that how this may be very much depends upon himself. The lad begins of his own accord to discuss the possibilities of a career, the chances of schoolfellows who are reading for examinations, or the merits of those who have actually won appointments. In all this one may witness some of the results of the competitive system. If competitive examinations had done nothing more than bring home to the bosom of English boys a sense of the necessity of prolonged individual effort,

they would have done much. They may be sometimes unfair in their operation ; they may often fail to secure for us the qualities which we want ; but they have at least not so much modified as revolutionised the school-boy's whole ideas of life.

There are many other agencies tending in the same direction at work with the English school-boy. As competitive examinations for scholarships, Civil Service clerkships, for the army and elsewhere, have opened up to him a novel view of the responsibilities of existence, so have the studies which these examinations involve immensely widened his general intellectual experience. Modern and ancient history, English and French literature—he looks at these from a standpoint to which he was once a stranger. There is, he at last perceives, some practical significance in them, and they bear a definite tangible relation to the business and conduct of life. Nor does the impulse proceed only from above. In many ways the modern English school-boy does a great deal for his own enlightenment. Boy politicians and philosophers there have always been, but they have been of the nature of portents and prodigies. Till recently school-boys have displayed, for the most part, an indifference to the history of their own times, as it may be learned from newspapers, and from conversation. Every school and every school boarding-house have now their library and reading-room. The boys themselves, though as far removed from being prigs as, it is to be hoped, young Englishmen will ever be, have their miniature Parliaments, and discuss the affairs of the day. Their

remarks may not be very edifying, but the very fact that these remarks are made, and such discussions held, testifies to an educational fact of no small value—educational, indeed, in the best and truest sense of all, since the progress is the gradual drawing out, strengthening, and exercising of faculties which, in the old state of things, were allowed to rust in desuetude.

The English public school system has become as much a national institution as Household Suffrage or Vote by Ballot. That it is supposed to suit the English character may be inferred from its adoption at the newer public schools which are springing up. How strong is the hold which universities and public schools together have upon the English mind, to what an extent their influences dominate the men who in turn are entrusted with the administration of the country, may be judged by the following estimate:—In the House of Commons, elected in 1874, 236, or more than a third, out of 658 members were Oxford or Cambridge men, while about 180 were public school men, of which total close upon a hundred came from Eton, and rather more than half a hundred from Harrow.

Nor has female education in England among the middle and upper classes failed to make a very perceptible degree of progress of late years. There are ladies' colleges, not only at Cambridge, but in most of the large and fashionable towns of the United Kingdom. There is an elaborate organisation of lectures of all kinds for female students. There are high schools for girls

of younger age, where much study is given to many subjects. But while in many instances it cannot be doubted that the young ladies of the day are gradually developing into intellectual and cultivated women, we are experiencing some of the disadvantages attendant upon an era of reform at high pressure, and female education in fashionable finishing schools is often far too pretentious to be sound. We have seen the British school-boy; let us briefly glance at his sister the English school-girl, as we may frequently meet her. She has a considerable acquaintance with text-books and manuals. She can answer questions on a host of minute incidents and irrelevant details connected with great historical events and involved in salient historical principles. But of the principles or events themselves, of their connection with what preceded them, and of their bearing on what came after, she has too often no kind of idea. In the same way, she is tolerably well informed as to the vegetable and mineral products of different districts in the United Kingdom, and it may even be of the various countries of the world. That these districts have ever been prominent in the national annals for other reasons, that grave political issues have ever been decided within them, or that precisely the same order of things, so far as civil and religious polity is concerned, does not obtain indifferently in each of these countries as in England, are facts which she does not always seem to realise.

Is it wonderful that the young ladies thus trained ripen into wives and mothers, paragons of their sex

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The English public school system has become as much a national institution as Household Suffrage or Vote by Ballot. That it is supposed to suit the English character may be inferred from its adoption at the newer public schools which are springing up. How strong is the hold which universities and public schools together have upon the English mind, to what an extent their influences dominate the men who in turn are entrusted with the administration of the country, may be judged by the following estimate:—In the House of Commons, elected in 1874, 236, or more than a third, out of 658 members were Oxford or Cambridge men, while about 180 were public school men, of which total close upon a hundred came from Eton, and rather more than half a hundred from Harrow.

Nor has female education in England among the middle and upper classes failed to make a very perceptible degree of progress of late years. There are ladies' colleges, not only at Cambridge, but in most of the large and fashionable towns of the United Kingdom. There is an elaborate organisation of lectures of all kinds for female students. There are high schools for girls

of younger age, where much study is given to many subjects. But while in many instances it cannot be doubted that the young ladies of the day are gradually developing into intellectual and cultivated women, we are experiencing some of the disadvantages attendant upon an era of reform at high pressure, and female education in fashionable finishing schools is often far too pretentious to be sound. We have seen the British school-boy; let us briefly glance at his sister the English school-girl, as we may frequently meet her. She has a considerable acquaintance with text-books and manuals. She can answer questions on a host of minute incidents and irrelevant details connected with great historical events and involved in salient historical principles. But of the principles or events themselves, of their connection with what preceded them, and of their bearing on what came after, she has too often no kind of idea. In the same way, she is tolerably well informed as to the vegetable and mineral products of different districts in the United Kingdom, and it may even be of the various countries of the world. That these districts have ever been prominent in the national annals for other reasons, that grave political issues have ever been decided within them, or that precisely the same order of things, so far as civil and religious polity is concerned, does not obtain indifferently in each of these countries as in England, are facts which she does not always seem to realise.

Is it wonderful that the young ladies thus trained ripen into wives and mothers, paragons of their sex

very likely, but with intellects imperfectly developed, or not developed at all? They have been instructed, not educated. No attempt made to educate them, save in the particular matter of music and dancing, has been made. They have, in other words, been crammed with the letter of text-books; they have not been taught in subjects. So long as parents are satisfied with this, so long as the examinations to which these young persons periodically submit—and their success in which is cited by the lady principal of the school as conclusive proof of the excellence of her establishment—proceed upon their present method, are mere tests of book-learning, and not of general intelligence, such will continue to be the case. The worst of it is there are few counterbalancing advantages to the system of which the modern school-girl is too frequently the victim. Although her mind is not being enriched with philosophical views of history, it is not necessarily turned towards the theory and practice of domestic management.

Here this general review of our educational state may close. It has necessarily been little more than a mere summary of salient features; it has been the narrative of changes in the course of accomplishment quite as much as of reforms actually achieved. It has often revealed tendencies rather than results. The key-note of the entire system, whether as applied to teachers or to taught, is organisation; better provision for the scholars, more effectual guarantees

that the schoolmasters shall be competent for their work, and shall have the opportunity of proving that competence to the public. It is, indeed, with education as it is with the question of labour and of capital, or of pauperism, or of co-operation. The system is not complete, the different duties to be performed by its component parts are not yet decided, the connecting-link between these different parts does not always exist. On the other hand, what was once a void is now filled by complex and more or less successful machinery. The law ensures to every subject of the United Kingdom a certain modicum of education; it does not guarantee that every boy who deserves such promotion, or who is capable of profiting by it, shall rise, by a series of gradual ascents, to the highest academic training; but supplemented as our educational system is by private enterprise and voluntary organisation, it renders it exceedingly improbable that such a boy should not have the wished-for chance. Something of what we have done in the case of our manufacturing industries we have done in the case of education. We have economised force. The great machine for the improvement of humanity has at last been fairly put in motion, its different parts may not be united so compactly as we shall some day witness, and the scale on which its labours are performed may be enlarged; but even as matters are, the masses in this country have had the means of self-elevation afforded them, and we know that there is springing up around us a new generation which will not be like



its predecessors, or which will, at least, have had at its disposal influences which its predecessors never knew. Elementary schools, secondary schools, public schools, universities, private teachers, private and public societies, are now putting forth their utmost efforts, and many of them are working in unity and accord. That the fundamental principles of a complete system of national education are entirely settled might be too much to say. It is for the future to show whether the State will ultimately recognise the duty of supplying, at the cost of the ratepayers, the children of all its subjects with instruction; whether, in other words, the "free school" programme will be realised. Finally, it is yet a moot point how long the compromise between such a system of public secular and private denominational teaching as was embodied in the Education Act of 1870 will endure. Every State grant given to any sectarian school for proficiency in non-religious subjects involves the principle of denominational endowment, and it has still to be seen whether in the course of years this principle will be formally sanctioned or definitely condemned.

END OF VOL. I.

